No 25 April 1985

IMAGINE™

Adventure Games Magazine

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Far Eastern Special

For players of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game

UK4 WHEN A STAR FALLS

by Graeme Morris

Hurled like a blazing spear from the night sky, the shooting-star would shape the fates of many — so it was written. The adventurers have the chance to reforge destiny. There is everything to gain.... or to lose.... when a star falls.

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UK5 EYE OF THE SERPENT

by Graeme Morris

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by Jim Bambra

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Editorial

I'll have to have words with that art director of ours; I mean, what sort of space is this, when I was going to tell you that this issue is much more than just a Graeme Davis testimonial, but that we've finally got round to a special issue all about the Far East, with new monsters and new weapons and all that sort of thing; and the scenario covers two games systems for the price of one, and you **Bushido** fans should be happy because it was written with you in mind, and there's a new twist to the development of Pelinore, whereby we've started venturing out to explore the County of Cerwyn, and looking at towns and villages and people, and still kept a bit of room for another location in the City League; and what about the cover eh? — that Jeremy Goodwin is a canny lad, what with designing figures and doing covers for some of the UK modules as well as finding time to knock this up for us; and another exciting short story, and all the normal bits and pieces, and I'm supposed to tell you all about it in two dozen lines? — two dozen, I ask you? — what sort of a design is that?

Paul Cockburn

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MONSTERS FROM THE FOLKLORE OF THE PHILIPPINES

by Graeme Davis

The folklore of the Philippine Islands contains a number of new and interesting monster types, which are treated here for the **AD&D**® game. Since the Philippines is an area with a number of native languages, the same monster may appear with slight variations under a number of different names; most of the local names are given for those treated here, and for a more complete survey, the reader is recommended to Maximo D Ramos' **Creatures of Philippine Lower Mythology** (University of Philippines Press, 1971).

Demons

Filipino demons seem to be creatures of a highly magical nature rather than inhabitants of another plane. Many of them live in large trees, and they are rarely pernicious or evil, content for the most part to frighten away those who intrude on their territories or fail to treat them with due respect, and only killing when greatly enraged. They are great pranksters.

All Filipino demons can become invisible at will, and each has a personal charm or jewel which is the source of its strength. If this can be won from the demon by wit or force, it will give the bearer the same strength (typically in the region 18^{01}-23 — the DM may select according to the power of the demon or roll on d6). Bright sunlight banishes them.

While the DM might rule that Filipino demons should be turnable on the 'Special' line of the clerics vs undead matrix, they do not seem to be deterred by holy symbols, and some actually delight in collecting numbers of them from frightened villagers.

AGTA (Demon)

Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1*
Armour Class: *3*
Move: *12"*
Hit Dice: *8*
% in Lair: *90%*
Treasure Type: *R*
No of Attacks: *2*
Damage/Attack: *variable*
Special Attacks: *size change, fear*
Special Defences: *size change*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *average-very*
Alignment: *Chaotic Neutral*
Size: *variable*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *Agta: VII/1450 + 10/hp*
Kapre: VII/1900 + 10/hp

The Agta, Bawo or Ungo appears as a muscular, black-skinned humanoid, and can vary its size instantly between 1ft and about 30ft. It is generally about 10-12ft in height, which may be its natural size.

As it increases in size, it becomes stronger, as follows: when it shrinks to 1ft, it has 2hp, attacks as a 1HD monster and causes 1d4 damage on a successful hit. It can enlarge itself to a maximum height equal to half its maximum hit points (as rolled on 8d8) in feet, ie an Agta with 54hp can reach a maximum height of 27ft. For every foot of its height, it will have 2hp, and for every 4ft of its height it attacks as a monster of 1HD and cause 1d4 damage. Thus, at 1-4ft it attacks as a 1 HD monster and causes 1d4 damage, at 5-8ft it attacks as a 2HD monster for 2d4 damage, and so on, up to a maximum of 8HD and 8d4 damage.

Agta live in large trees, particularly favouring banyans and mangroves, and resent any interference with their trees. They attack with two fists, and on a successful double attack can rend as a Carnivorous Ape (**Monster Manual**), causing additional damage as for two successful fist attacks.

Another type of Agta is the Kapre or Pugot, which has a shapechange ability in addition to the Agta's size change. Its favourite forms are those of a dark cat, dog or boar which has fiery eyes and breathes blue-green fire, a pure white fowl, or a headless and often mutilated corpse. In this last form it will caper along, singing merrily to itself and eating by pushing food into its bubbling neck-stump. Characters of less than 4th level who see it in this form must save vs spells or flee.

BATIBAT (Demon)

Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1*
Armour Class: *4*
Move: *12"*
Hit Dice: *6*
% in Lair: *80%*
Treasure Type: *R*
No of Attacks: *2*
Damage/Attack: *2-12*
Special Attacks: *ride*
Special Defences: *none*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *low-average*
Alignment: *Chaotic Neutral*
Size: *L (8-10ft)*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp Value: *V/ 475 + 6/hp*

The Batibat is a relative of the Agta and Pugot, but does not have their shape-changing abilities. It is a dark-skinned humanoid, 8-10ft tall and broad enough to fill a doorway as it enters. The only magical ability it possesses is the ability to ride a sleeping victim in the same manner as a Night Hag (**Monster Manual**), although it will only do this under great provocation. In the one story where this occurs, the Batibat attacks members of a family which owns a large post — all that remains of its home tree, which it still inhabits. It is not known what happens to the souls of those ridden to death by a Batibat.

Both forms of this demon can also emit a great roar once per turn, which causes **fear** as the spell unless the appropriate saving throw is made.

One favourite trick of the Pugot is to rush between the legs of an unwary traveller in its boar form, increase its size and carry its victim off, never to be seen again.

TIKBALANG (Demon)

Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1*
Armour Class: *1*
Move: *12"/18"*
Hit Dice: *6*
% in Lair: *20%*
Treasure Type: *I+R+U*
No of Attacks: *3 or 2*
Damage/Attack: *feet 1-8, claws 1-4, bite 1-8*
Special Attacks: *see below*
Special Defences: *see below*
Magic Resistance: *10%*
Intelligence: *very*
Alignment: *Chaotic Evil*
Size: *M (6-7ft)*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *VII/ 1275 + 6/hp*

The Tikbalang, Binangunan or Tulung is one of the most feared of Filipino demons. It is humanoid in appearance, tall and gaunt, with a horse's head armed with sharp teeth. Its straight black hair flows down over its shoulders, and its horse-like legs end in strong taloned feet.

It is, however, an adroit shapechanger, and commonly takes the form of an old man. It enjoys misleading travellers into the bamboo thicket where it lairs, usually in a small hut. Depending on its mood, it will then devour its victims or turn **invisible** and enjoy the spectacle as they try to find their way out. When a Tikbalang leads a victim into its thicket, it can cast over the victim a glamer similar to that caused by a **maze** spell — the victim will be trapped for the same length of time, although the effect does not include travel to another plane.

Apart from these abilities, the Tikbalang can **fly** at will by walking on air, and can **cause blindness**, **disease** and **insanity** once each per day. It can use a **word of recall** once per day, vanishing in a cloud of dust and falling stones similar in effect to the hailstone type of **ice storm**, which causes 1d6 damage to any within 10ft of the spot it vacates (saving throw halves damage). In its natural form, it can also roar once per turn, causing **fear** as the spell unless the appropriate saving throw is made. 5% of Tikbalangs can also **immolate** in the same way as a Type VI Demon (**Monster Manual**), the flames causing 3d6 damage to any within range.

If forced into hand-to-hand combat, the Tikbalang will assume its natural form, and can attack either with two claws and a bite or with its two talons.

The Tikbalang may be forced to surrender its charm if it can be ridden like a horse until exhausted. The stone is a rounded pebble which glows like a hot coal, and no Tikbalang stone confers less than 20 strength; some may also confer other of the Tikbalang's abilities. Tikbalangs have immense strength, and if pressed throw rocks as a Stone Giant (Monster Manual) or uproot trees to use as weapons.

Tikbalangs sometimes have great wealth, and are particularly enthusiastic collectors of holy symbols and other religious items, sometimes extorting them from villagers along with other valuables on a protection-racket basis.

ASWANG

Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1*
Armour Class: *4*
Move: *12"/18"*
Hit Dice: *5*
% in Lair: *see below*
Treasure Type: *nil*
No of Attacks: *2*
Damage/Attack: *1-3*
Special Attacks: *see below*
Special Defences: *see below*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *average-very*
Alignment: *Chaotic Evil*
Size: *M (5-6ft)*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *Aswang: V/435 + 5/hp*
Balbal: V/360 + 5/hp

The Aswang, Mangalok or Boroka has the appearance of a normal human woman, and indeed exists as such by day, often living a normal village life. At night, however, she takes on her true nature, becoming a humanoid monster with a hag-like appearance, strong nails and a very long threadlike tongue. She may also shapechange at will to the form of a huge night-bird with the head of a woman.

The Aswang can sense death in the same way as the Segben, at a distance of up to 1 mile, and will sit on the roof of a house where the corpse lies, sucking out its blood and organs through her long tongue. The tongue may be extended up to 12ft in length, and has a sharp point, but is so fine as to be indetectable 90% of the time, except to individuals with the ability to see invisible. She will attack the living in the same way, piercing the jugular vein with her tongue as the victim sleeps, and draining blood at the rate of 1hp per round. Her saliva contains a local anaesthetic, which requires sleeping victims to save vs poison or continue to sleep through the attack. When fully gorged (having taken blood equal to half her original hit points) the Aswang's humanoid form appears swollen as if with an advanced pregnancy, and her movement rate is halved. The Aswang is particularly vulnerable at this time, and takes great care not to be seen.

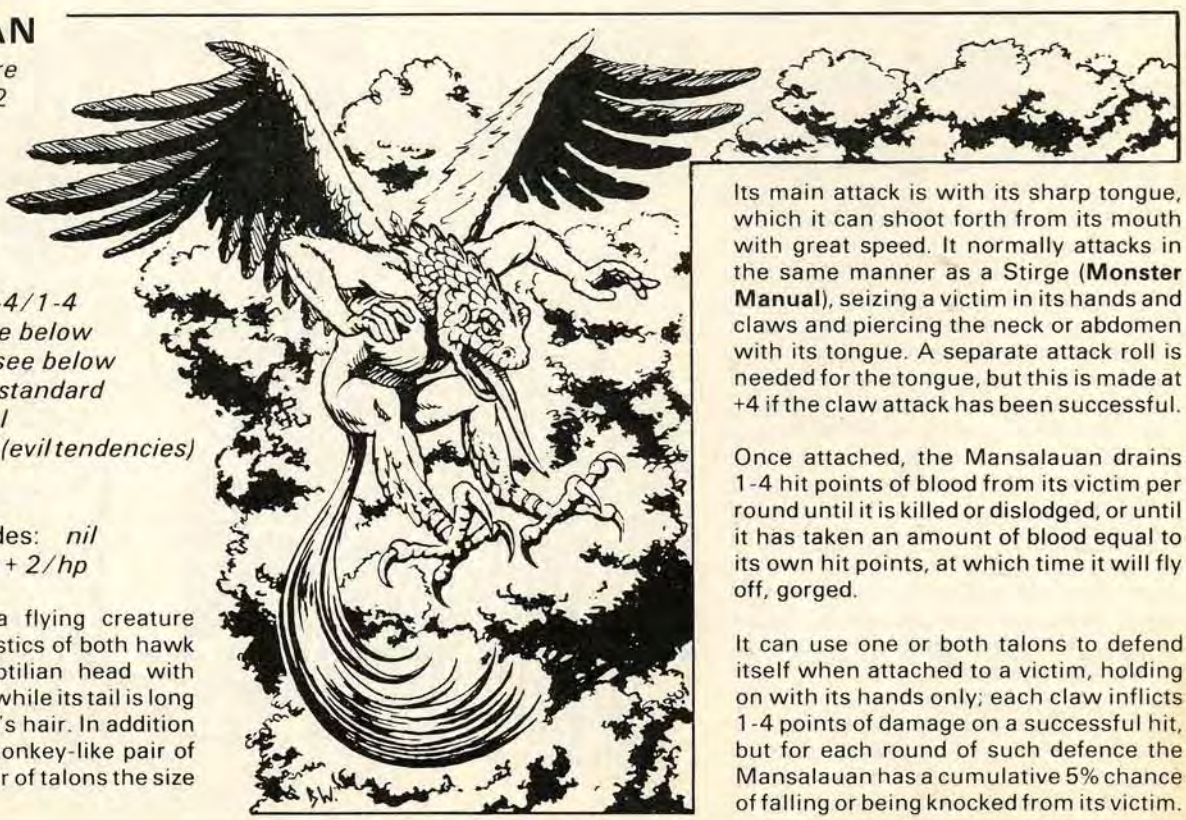
The Aswang will only fight if she cannot flee. She uses her strong nails or the talons of her avian form in self-defence, a successful hit causing 1-3 points of damage in either case.

A human may become an Aswang in one of four ways:

i) by the application of a magical ointment compounded of chicken dropping dissolved in coconut oil and mixed with human flesh and blood, along with certain other magical operations;
ii) the daughters of an Aswang will inherit her condition;
iii) the kiss of a dying Aswang will pass on her condition to one willing initiate;
iv) an Aswang may force her condition upon another by lacing their food with human flesh or with her own saliva.

The ointment is the secret of the transformation ability; normally hidden about the house in a stoppered bamboo tube or clay jar, it is used every night to effect the transformation. Human form may be regained by exposure to sunlight, or by washing off the ointment in fresh water. The Aswang is repelled by salt, vinegar and certain spices in the same way as a

MANSALAUAN



Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1-12*
Armour Class: *7*
Move: *4"/18"*
Hit Dice: *1+1*
% in Lair: *20%*
Treasure Type: *nil*
No of Attacks: *2*
Damage/Attack: *1-4/1-4*
Special Attacks: *see below*
Special Defences: *see below*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *animal*
Alignment: *Neutral (evil tendencies)*
Size: *S*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *II/44 + 2/hp*

The Mansalauan is a flying creature sharing the characteristics of both hawk and bat. It has a reptilian head with glowing gemlike eyes, while its tail is long and fine, like a woman's hair. In addition to its wings it has a monkey-like pair of hands, and a strong pair of talons the size of human feet.

Its main attack is with its sharp tongue, which it can shoot forth from its mouth with great speed. It normally attacks in the same manner as a Stirge (**Monster Manual**), seizing a victim in its hands and claws and piercing the neck or abdomen with its tongue. A separate attack roll is needed for the tongue, but this is made at +4 if the claw attack has been successful.

Once attached, the Mansalauan drains 1-4 hit points of blood from its victim per round until it is killed or dislodged, or until it has taken an amount of blood equal to its own hit points, at which time it will fly off, gorged.

It can use one or both talons to defend itself when attached to a victim, holding on with its hands only; each claw inflicts 1-4 points of damage on a successful hit, but for each round of such defence the Mansalauan has a cumulative 5% chance of falling or being knocked from its victim.

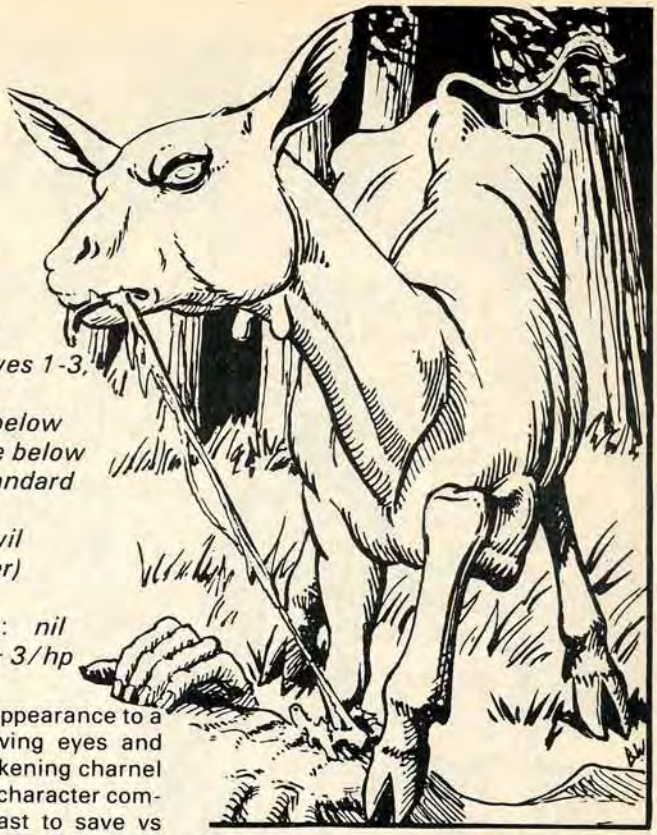
Vampire is repelled by garlic. Although the Aswang has certain vampiric tendencies, it is not classified as Undead and is not vulnerable to holy symbols or other religious objects.

The **Iqui** is the rarer male Aswang.

The Balbal is a variant form of Aswang. It is a forest-dweller, and does not change form, always appearing as a gaunt humanoid figure with very loose skin, which it can use to glide for distances of up to 60ft after the manner of a flying squirrel. Its tongue is thicker and stronger than that of an Aswang, and its modus operandi is to use its tongue to lift a corpse through a hole in the thatch which it has made with its strong nails. The corpse is then taken back into the forest to be devoured. In all other respects, the Balbal is identical to the Aswang.

SEGBEN

Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1-3*
Armour Class: *7*
Move: *18"*
Hit Dice: *2+2*
% in Lair: *10%*
Treasure Type: *nil*
No of Attacks: *1 or 2*
Damage/Attack: *hooves 1-3, bite 1-4 + special*
Special Attacks: *see below*
Special Defences: *see below*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *low*
Alignment: *Chaotic Evil*
Size: *S (3ft at shoulder)*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *III/ 120 + 3/hp*



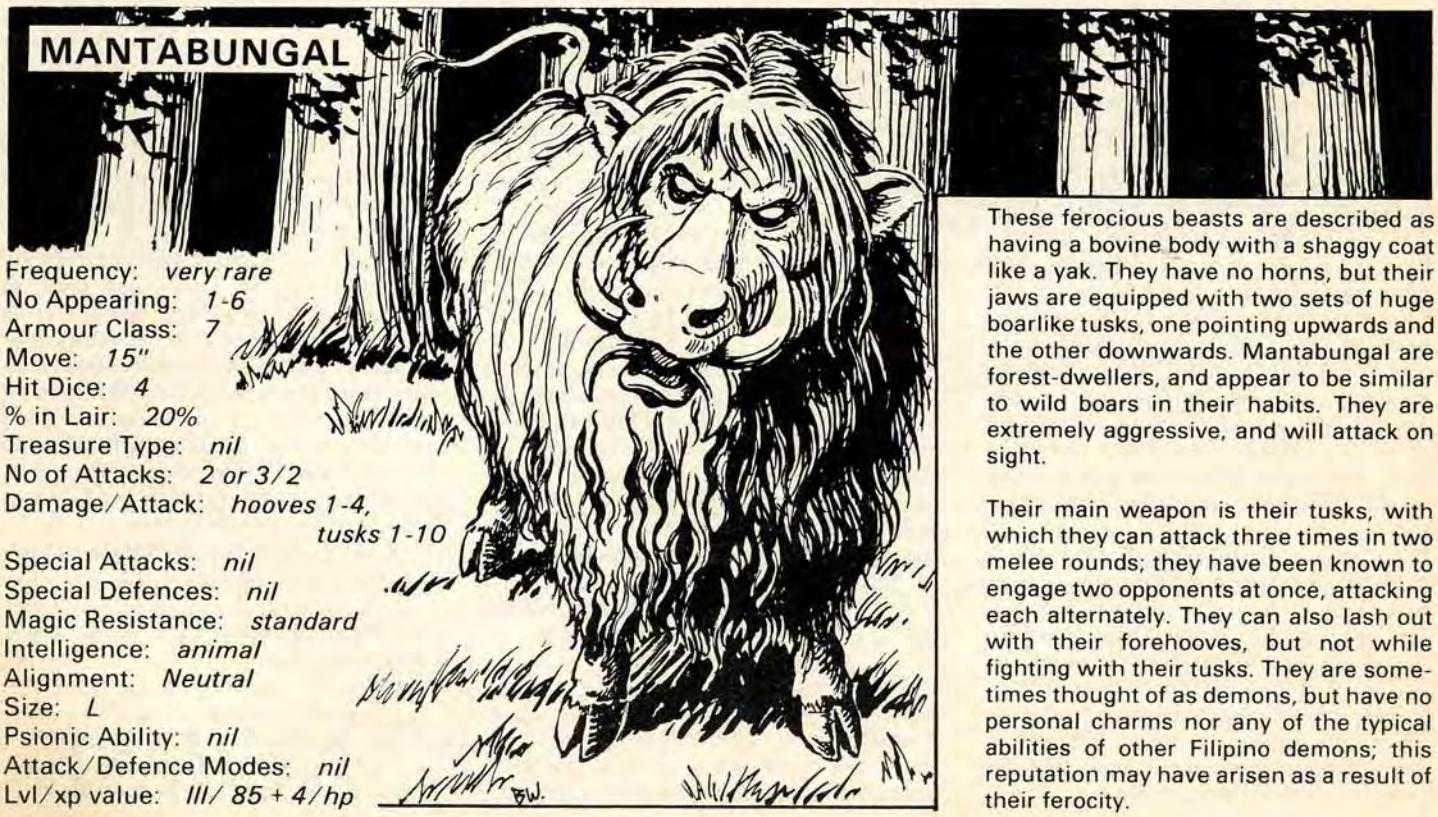
The Segben is similar in appearance to a hornless goat, with glowing eyes and large ears. It exudes a sickening charnel smell which requires any character coming within 5ft of the beast to save vs poison or attack at -1 for 2-8 turns through nausea.

Segben are destroyed by sunlight, and generally hide in the darkest recesses of the forest until dusk, when they appear under the floor of a house where someone lies gravely ill or dying. They can sense the smell of death at a distance of up to a mile, and will seize any opportunity to make off with an unguarded corpse. They are not known to frequent graveyards, however, apparently preferring to move in immediately after death.

If surprised at their feast Segben will usually flee, fighting only if cornered or if the odds are heavily in their favour. They can attack by lashing out with their small forehooves, but their most feared attack is their bite — if they successfully bite any victim, or even his shadow, the victim must make a System Shock roll or die immediately.

Although they have a number of ghoulish characteristics, Segben are not Undead and are not affected by holy symbols or the like.

MANTABUNGAL



Frequency: *very rare*
No Appearing: *1-6*
Armour Class: *7*
Move: *15"*
Hit Dice: *4*
% in Lair: *20%*
Treasure Type: *nil*
No of Attacks: *2 or 3/2*
Damage/Attack: *hooves 1-4, tusks 1-10*
Special Attacks: *nil*
Special Defences: *nil*
Magic Resistance: *standard*
Intelligence: *animal*
Alignment: *Neutral*
Size: *L*
Psionic Ability: *nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *nil*
Lvl/xp value: *III/ 85 + 4/hp*

These ferocious beasts are described as having a bovine body with a shaggy coat like a yak. They have no horns, but their jaws are equipped with two sets of huge boarlike tusks, one pointing upwards and the other downwards. Mantabungal are forest-dwellers, and appear to be similar to wild boars in their habits. They are extremely aggressive, and will attack on sight.

Their main weapon is their tusks, with which they can attack three times in two melee rounds; they have been known to engage two opponents at once, attacking each alternately. They can also lash out with their forehooves, but not while fighting with their tusks. They are sometimes thought of as demons, but have no personal charms nor any of the typical abilities of other Filipino demons; this reputation may have arisen as a result of their ferocity.

The descriptions given above are for some of the more distinctive Filipino monsters; the folklore of the Philippine Islands contains several other creatures which can be equated more or less precisely with European counterparts.

Aghoy, **Encante**, **Mangmangkit**, **Mahomanay**, **Palasekan** and **Tahamaling** are some of the local names given to a race of creatures almost identical to the Sylvan Elf (MM). Their physical appearance is the same as Tolkien's Elves, and their activities are the same as those of British Elves or Faerie, although they dress like ordinary Filipino villagers.

Calanget, **Lampong**, **Lupa**, **Matanda** and **Tianak** are beings similar to Dwarves and Gnomes (MM). Their underground dwellings are usually guarded by large termite mounds, and they are reputedly very wealthy, although their gifts of gold and gems to humans frequently turn into dung or pebbles after a short time. They have the power to ruin crops if offended.

The **Catao** and **Ughoy** are the Merfolk (MM) of the Philippines. Being partly fish and partly mammal, they attack those who eat fish or meat, and they have the **charm** ability of Nixies (MM). They generally drag victims underwater to drown, but have been known to become enamoured of charismatic humans, kidnapping them and casting **water breathing** on them in the same way as Nixies.

Several types of Giant and Ogre also inhabit the Philippines. The **Bannog** is a giant bird similar to a Roc (MM), and the **Ikugan** is a giant monkey, but the others are similar to Hill and Stone Giants (MM) and the Mountain Giant (FF). Filipino Ogres are, for the most part, identical to their European cousins (MM); their names include **Kumao**, **Sir'ing**, **Ta-awi**, and **Tarabusao**. The **Busao** is a Cyclops type, and the **Dato-Busao**, or King Busao, has a forehead horn. The **Kurita** has two or three pairs of arms. Some Filipino Ogres have the ability to shapechange into human or animal form. Strangely, the Indian **Garuda** (**Deities & Demigods** — now **Legends and Lore**) is known in the Philippines, but has the habits of a bloodthirsty Ogre.

Certain types of **Aswang**, **Iqui** and **Boroka** (see above), as well as the **Manananggal**, seem to be identical to the **Penanggalan** of Indonesia (FF); they may be related, but the description of the Aswang given above deliberately excludes the separable head characteristic of the Penanggalan, since the Aswang is almost always a normal human with the ability to transform, rather than an Undead monster taking possession of a headless body.

Since a great number of Filipino monsters have the ability to shapechange into animal form, it is difficult to tell whether there are creatures which can be described as Lycanthropes (MM), although the **Malakat** and an unnamed beast from Apayao do appear to be European-style werewolves. The latter may even be a Jackalwere (MM) or something similar, since it has a doglike smell even when in human form. At any rate, an iron knife with which one was attacked passed through its body without causing it any harm.

Lastly, the Philippines abound with witches and wise-women, who, like their European counterparts, can cause and cure all kinds of diseases and ailments and assume the form of various animals.

There are also a few unique and extremely powerful monsters, which seem to be an attempt by the natives to explain solar and lunar eclipses. The **Minokawa** or **Baua** is a huge bird, the **Baconaua** is an immense shark, and the **Mamelu** or **Marcupo** is a huge snake, all of which swallow the sun or moon from time to time, but are persuaded to release it by the noise and music made by the Filipinos at the festival of each eclipse.

Graeme Davis

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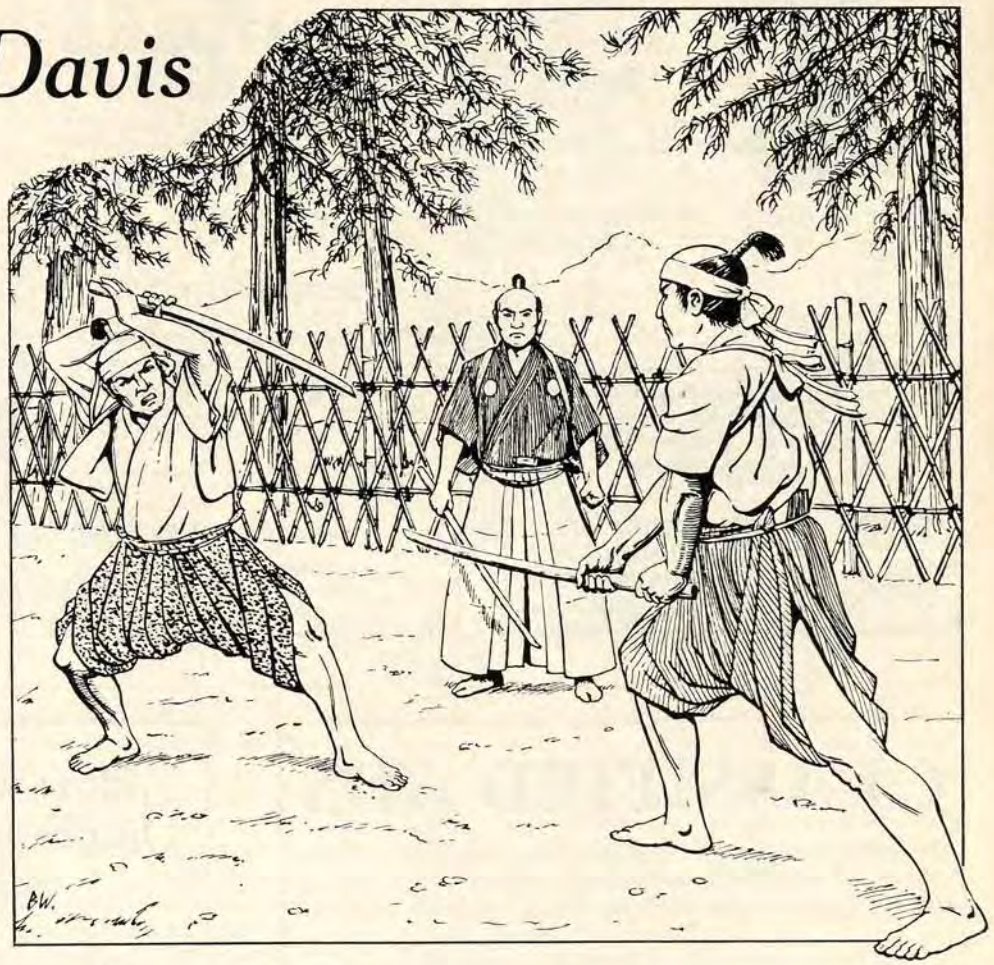
JAPANESE BUJUTSU in the AD&D® GAME

by Graeme Davis



The weapons tables of the **AD&D® Players' Handbook** (pp37-8) show a distinct European bias, which is probably one reason why the system is sometimes accused of being too culture-specific for a fantasy game. The only concessions to the Oriental flavour of the Monk character class are the Bo-staff and the Jo-stick, and while a sword is a sword in more or less any setting, DMs and players may be interested in extending the range of 'exotic' Oriental weapons, such as Bruce Lee's now famous nunchaku, available to the Monk and to Japanese-type variant classes such as the Samurai and Ninja.

A range of weapons from the Japanese martial arts is adapted below in an AD&D format, with brief descriptions. Other weapons which may, for game purposes, be considered as equivalent to weapons treated in the PHB tables are also listed. With regard to unarmed combat, karate has already been covered by the Monks open-hand combat rules, so a simple, but hopefully easy-to-use, set of rules governing the use of Judo or similar arts is appended here.

Japanese Weapons

Name	Weight (gp)	Damage S/M	Damage L	Length	Space Req'd	Speed Factor	AC Adjustment 10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Bo staff[1]	*35*	1-6	1-3	c 5′	3′	3	+3	—	+1	—	-1	-3	-5	-7	-9
Feruzue	15	1-4	1-3	3′	6′	1	+3	—	+2	—	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8
Fukidake	5	1-3	1-2	—	—	(fire rate 2)	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
Hachiwara	15	1-4	1-3	1′	1′	2	+1	—	—	-1	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Hineri	30	1-6	1-4	6′	4′	5	+1	—	—	—	-1	-3	-5	-7	-9
Jitte[2]	20	1-4	1-3	1½′	1′	2	+1	—	—	-1	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Jo stick	*10*	*1-4*	*1-3*	2′	3′	2	+2	—	+1	—	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8
Kumade	25	1-4	1-4	8′	6′	6	+1	—	+1	—	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8
Mankirigusami	40	1-4	1-3	12′	12′	8	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2
Nagegama	65	1-6	1-4	12-14′	10′	8	+4	+1	+2	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-2
Nunchaka	10	1-6	1-4	c 2½′	4′	4	+2	+2	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-4	-5
Sai[2]	15	2-5	1-3	1½′	1′	2	+3	+1	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-3	-3
Shuriken, dart	3	1-3	1-2	—	—	(fire rate 3)	+1	—	+1	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Shuriken, star	1-2	1-2	1-2	—	—	(fire rate 3)	+1	+1	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-4	-6
Tonfa	10	1-4	1-3	2′	—	1	+3	—	+2	+1	—	-1	-2	-3	-4
Yawara	25	Special		—	—	1	+4	-	+2	—	—	-1	-3	-5	-7

Notes To Weapons Table

Entries in *italics* differ slightly from the data given in the **PHB**.

[1] The art of Bojutsu applies to the use of both the Bo staff and other staff weapons, so that a character proficient in one will be able to use any other at no penalty.

[2] The art of Jittejutsu applies to the use of both Jitte and Sai.

Weapon Descriptions

Bo Staff: A staff, slightly thinner than the European quarterstaff and 5-6' in length. The Bo is a two-handed weapon.
Feruzue: Unusual weapon with 3' long hollow stave containing a chain attached to an iron ball. When the stave is brandished, the ball flies out with killing force.
Fukidake: Light, 9' long blowpipe for bird-hunting. Darts are about 10" long.
Hachiwara: (lit 'helmet breaker') Curved iron bar with hook near the grip. May be used to disarm, breaks swords 1in20.
Hineri: Also *neji*. Stave weapon, with multi-spiked head on long shaft. Used to capture wrongdoers by entangling the loose sleeves of their kimonos.
Jitte: An iron truncheon or small club, about 18" long, with a cross-guard extended forwards to form a blade-trapping fork; can be used to disarm an opponent (see below).
Jo Stick: A light, 2' wooden baton, sometimes used in pairs.
Kumade: Grappling hook on 8' shaft, used for combat at sea, pulling down barricades, etc.
Mankirigusami: A 12' chain whip with a weighted end. May be used to entangle (see below).
Nagegama: Siege defence weapon, consisting of a sickle-like blade with 12' of chain attached to the handle, so that it may be thrown from castle walls and retrieved. May be used to entangle (see below).
Nunchaku: A flail made of two 1' wooden batons joined by a length of rope or chain.
Sai: Similar to the Jitte (qv), with a dagger, usually octagonal in section, in place of a truncheon. May be used to disarm (see below).
Shuriken, dart: A small throwing spike, lighter than the dart detailed in the **PHB**.
Shuriken, star: The throwing star of Kung Fu fame. May be perforated to scream in flight.
Tonfa: The handle of a small handmill, consisting of a wooden baton 1.5-2' long with a handle set at right-angles some 6" from one end. The handle is grasped so that the baton lies along the forearm for jabbing and smashing blows.
Yawara: A small wooden dumbell fitting into the hand, used to reinforce punches. Adds +2 to open-handed damage.

Other Weapons

Swords: *Katana* — Samurai bastard sword. With the Wakizashi forms the 'daisho', the pair of swords symbolising Samurai status; *No-dachi* — Two-handed sword; *Wakizashi* — Shortsword.
Daggers: *Aiguchi* — Poinard or heavy stiletto; *Tanto* — Dagger; *Kozuka* — Knife; *Kogai* — Skewer.
Spears (yari): *Sankaku-yari, Ryo-shinogi-yari* — Infantry spears; *Su-yari* — Lance.
Polearms: *Naginata* — Sword-bladed polearm, Glaive; *Ono* — Poleaxe; *Fumata-yari* — Hooked polearm, Bill-guisarme.

Entanglement by Flexible Weapon Attack

The attacker must state that a weapon is being used to entangle rather than to strike. On a successful hit against (AC10 + Dex bonuses + magical protection bonuses), the defender must save against dexterity on a d20 to avoid entanglement. The weapon will cause 1-2 points of damage regardless of whether the entanglement itself is successful.

Disarming with Jitte, Hachiwara or Sai

When these weapons are used to defend against an attack, they reduce the defender's AC by 1, as would the use of a shield; the defender must state that they are being used to parry. On a successful parry (ie when a blow would have landed but for the use of the parrying weapon), the attacker must save against dexterity on a d20, with a modifier equal to the difference between attacker's dexterity and defender's dexterity.
***Example**: Two first level Monks are fighting, one with a Katana, one with a pair of Sai. The Monk with the Sai elects to parry his opponent's next attack, thus reducing his AC from 10 to 9, and the swordsman rolls a 10 on his attack, enough to hit AC10 but not AC9, so that the Katana has been parried by the Sai. The attacker has 17 dexterity, while the defender has 15 dexterity, so that the attacker must roll 19 or less (17+2) on a d20 to avoid being disarmed. If the attacker had 15 dexterity and the defender 17, a roll or 13 (15-2) or less would be needed to avoid disarming.*

Archery

The Japanese had both crossbows and longbows that differed from the European equivalents. The *teppo-yumi* is a light sporting crossbow, with a stock like a gun's. There was also the *do-kyu*, the repeating crossbow. The bolts were stored in a box on the top of the stock, and the mechanism was operated by a lever which spanned the bow and dropped a bolt into place.
The use of the Japanese asymmetric longbow requires a slightly different technique to that for the European longbow, and must be studied as a separate weapons proficiency. For purposes of range and fire rate, the Japanese bow (*kyu*) is treated as a composite longbow.
The pull of a bow was matched to the strength of the user. This can be simulated by allowing characters to add + to hit and damage for each two points of strength over 11, providing they are equipped with a bow matched to their strength. All other blows are used at -2.
There were also several types of arrow:
Yanagi-ha — Willow Leaf; Standard
Watakusi — Flesh-tearer; -1 to hit, +1 damage per man-rating of bow used.
Armour Piercer — +1 to hit, -2 damage.
Karimata — Rope-cutter; -1 to hit, 1-4 damage.
Humming Bulb — -1 to hit, damage 1-3. The arrow, fitted with a signalling device, screams in flight; it is intended as a signalling device rather than a weapon.

Judo

At the most basic level, combats involving the use of Judo and similar martial arts consist of two types of attack — throws and locks.

Throws

On a successful grapple attack, the victim is allowed a saving throw vs wands to avoid being thrown. This saving throw is modified only by dexterity, and if the victim is thrown two further saving throws must be made, the first vs dexterity to avoid dropping any hand-held object, and the second vs. wands again (modified by dexterity only if the victim has also been trained in Judo or a similar art) to avoid landing badly. If the victim lands badly, there is a chance equal to (10% x assailant's level) of a knockout, and at the DM's option delicate items carried in a backpack or belt pouches may have to save vs crushing blow to avoid being broken. Two Monks fighting with Judo make all relevant saving throws at a bonus equal to their respective levels.

Locks

On a successful grapple attack, the victim must save vs wands as above, and if this save is failed, a lock has been applied to an arm, neck, or other joint. The joint to which the lock has been applied may be determined using hit location tables or left to the attacker's choice. The victim is now immobilised, and the attacker has the choice of holding (most locks can be held virtually indefinitely) or closing the lock, which can result in the dislocation or fracture of the joint in question.

Bibliography

A great deal of information on Japanese martial arts, as well as a wealth of other ideas for DMs interested in Japanese-style campaigns, can be found in the **Bushido** rulebooks by Paul Hume and Bob Charrette (FGU), already adapted to FRP and thus fairly easy to digest. Further sources include Donn F Draeger's books **Classical Bujutsu** and **Classical Budo**, and Ronald Knutsen's work **Japanese Polearms**. Stone's **Glossary of Arms and Armour** is also a valuable source of illustrations, not only of Japanese military equipment, but also of a wide range of other weapons and armour.

Graeme Davis

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We are now also distributing a range of high quality games and play aids from Standard Games, including the ever-popular **Siege** and **Cry Havoc** games (plus **'Scenario Book 1'** - 6 extra scenarios for use with Cry Havoc for only £2.95), and **Samurai Blades** (as reviewed in the March issue of Imagine). Also new from Standard is **DRAGONROAR** (£12.95) - a role-playing game ideally suited to the beginner as it contains absolutely **everything** needed to get started (rules, dice, floorplans, character/monster sheets - even a special cassette tape with introduction/solo adventure!).

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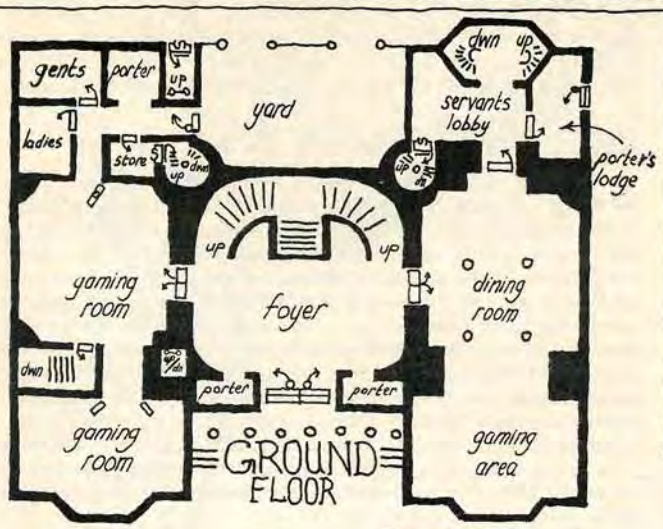
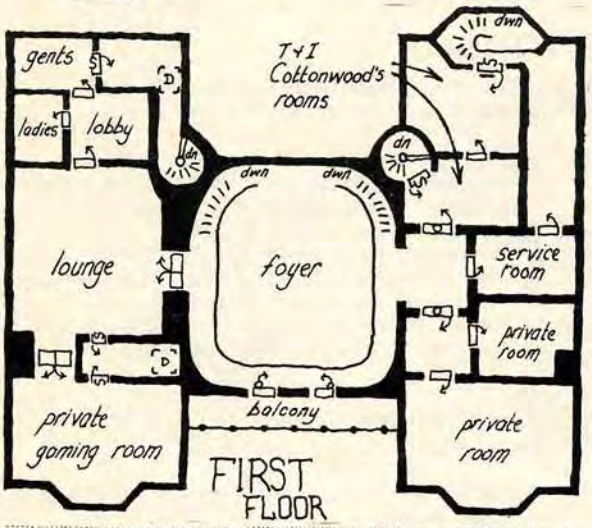
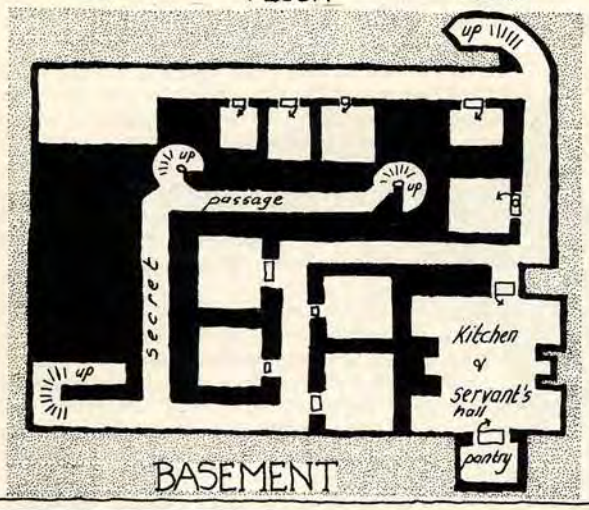
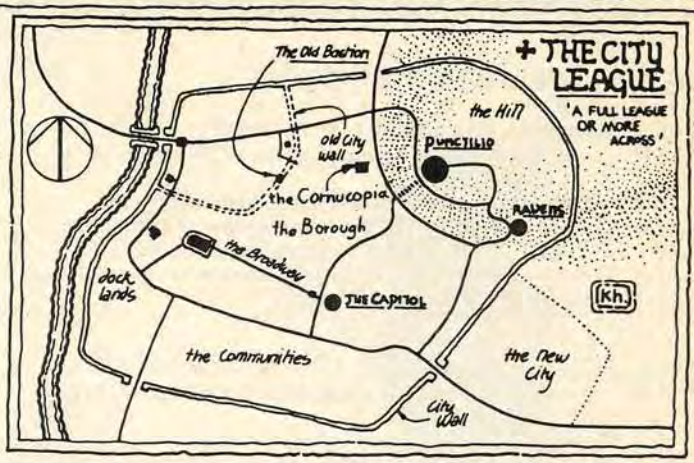


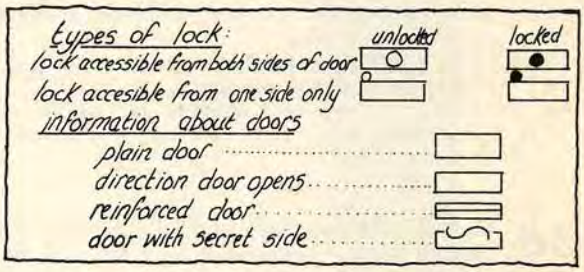






The CORNUCOPIA

A Gambling Den



by Venetia Lee

In a quiet, residential street of the League is a discreet town house — the Cornucopia. Fashionable, spiced with intrigue, it is patronised by thieves, young sprigs and the scions of merchant families. Serious gamblers and corrupt officials provide leavening. Admission is solely for members (by invitation only) and guests. The Cornucopia is the place to go for deals of the expensive kind; here you can buy without taxes and sell without questions. For adventurers, to be invited here indicates a considerable rise up the social scale. It may be their first (and last) chance to mix with the nobility or with the aristocracy of crime. Prices for refreshments are ten times normal (and quality twice as good). The minimum stake for a game is 100gp, but no-one ever stoops so low. The place is rigged with magical devices to warn the staff should anyone use magic to enhance their chances of winning.

Anyone who makes a study of the Cornucopia will turn up secrets like a nest of worms. To start with, they may find out that Rugbucket (**33a**) is only the manager; further investigation will point to Harben Mousecraft (**33d**) as the real owner. He is, in turn, fronting for Tom Cottonwood (**33e**), although this will be difficult to ascertain, as Tom appears to be working as an informant for Harben. And behind Tom is his wife, Imelda (**33f**). Tom was, in his youth, a low class thief, who made a good marriage to a respectable woman but could not quite give up his shady connections. His wife, Imelda, made good as a textile merchant and is welcome in polite society. Her friends find a lot to pity her for; her husband, they feel, always lets her down with his gambling debts and his dreadful friends. They know it was once rumoured that he was mixed up in something criminal, but she forgave him and pulled strings to get him off the hook.

Imelda doesn't mind the condescension, because she hopes to have the last laugh. She is not only a thief, but a very important one; the mastermind behind the Cornucopia — to say nothing of any number of daring burglaries and a lot of profitable smuggling. Tom and Harben do the groundwork, while she plans and carries out the crimes. In this way it is difficult ever to pin anything concrete on any one of them.

MAJOR MEMBERS OF STAFF

33a **Gerchin Rugbucket**; M; F5; N/N(E);
Longsword, dagger, knuckledusters; AC 9/10; hp 35/45;

H
S 14 ☐ *Garish shirt and breeches, once muscled, now fat.*
I 12 ☐ *Ostensibly proprietor, actually manager of Cornucopia*
W 10 ☐ *Vulgar, greedy, shrewd – makes people feel superior*
D 11 ☐ *Knows gambling fraternity and some thieves; was F6 until he ran to seed; ex-bankrupt*
C 15
Ch 11

33b **Greta Calkinnagrat**; F; F5/T6; N/CN;
Shortbow, shortsword, mace, sling; hp 23/29; AC 5/6

G
S 15 ☐ *Bright tunic over leather trousers and jerkin*
I 14 ☐ *Major-domo of Cornucopia, cutpurse, does not mix the two*
W 9 ☐ *Ambitious but patient, sharp tongued and suffers no nonsense; tough as old boots; scornful of all other races*
D 16
C 10 ☐ *Knows gambling fraternity and is member of secret association of gnome thieves*
Ch 14

33c **Sally Messenger**; F; T8; C/NE;
Longsword, darts; hp 30/40; AC 8/10

H
S 14 ☐ *Pretty; wears flashy, revealing dresses or shabby cloak over leather armour*
I 14
W 10 ☐ *Head croupier, girl about town and conwoman*
D 14 ☐ *Selfish, cold, heartless, vamp*
C 13 ☐ *Frequents Cornucopia, Madame Zalu's (**22a**), and other fashionable places – often with very wealthy escort; sister of Fionn (**32a**).*
Ch 17

33d **Harben Mousecraft**; M; T9; C/CN;
Longsword +2 (+4 vs Lawful), sling; hp31/32, AC5

H
S 14 ☐ *Black leathers or shirt and breeches, short, black cloak, fanciful black hat; **ring of invisibility**; in Basic: **amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP**; in Advanced: **amulet of proof against detection and location**,*
I 13
W 11
D 17
C 14 ☐ *Master Thief/Thief*
Ch 14 ☐ *Fashionable scoundrel and raconteur, self-seeking, astute, has difficulty resisting women*
☐ *Knows most rakes about town, tries to know everything about everybody; uses Basilisks (**32**) as an information service; habituee of Cornucopia, father of Elimy (**33j**)*

33e **Tom Cottonwood**; M; T10; N/CN;
Longsword +2, dagger +1; hp 45/57; AC 3/0

H
S 15 ☐ *Expensive, fashionable clothes; in Basic: **ring of protection +3, medallion of ESP 30'**; in Advanced: **bracers of defence AC4, ring of protection from normal missiles, medallion of ESP***
I 12
W 11
D 18
C 16 ☐ *Apparently 'Imelda's no-good husband', gentleman about town, actually owns Cornucopia and has city wide criminal connections, Master Thief*
Ch 14 ☐ *Good natured as far as it is practical, patient, vindictive*
☐ *Knows most upper class gamblers and therefore which of the nobility and merchants are corruptible.*

33f **Imelda Cottonwood**; F; T11; C/CE;
Shortsword +3 (finds traps, sees invisible), **dagger of venom, swordstick +1**; hp 40/52; AC 2

H
S 10 ☐ *Very expensive dresses in subdued colours; **ring of protection +4, cloak of invisibility**, scrolls with **invisible stalker, lightning bolt** and **fireball***
I 17
W 16
D 18 ☐ *Textile merchant, smuggler, Master Thief*
C 15 ☐ *Practical first, then sentimental (about Tom, her children and Harben), ambitious, loves secrets and stealing*
Ch 17 ☐ *Knows merchants, much nobility and enough judges; four children (**33g-j**) of varying alignments*

(In Basic a **dagger of venom** acts as a **dagger +1** that, on a roll of a natural 20, injects poison into the victim; it holds 6 doses of poison and can be refilled)

OTHER STAFF

The staff, waiters, lesser croupiers and entertainers wear blue livery. 20% are T 1-3, 50% are F 1-4, and the rest are Fr 2-4. There are, in addition, 8 F8 guards (hp 64/80, AC1) armed with **broadswords +1**.

IMELDA'S FAMILY

33g-j **Rodern** is the eldest. He is in the Punctillan, where his parents hoped he would be helpful to them. Alas, he is taking his duties seriously and they dare not even confide in him. **Karel**, the second, is their long term investment. He has been enrolled in the Magic Users' School (**10**). A fine lad, he spends most of his generous allowance around the Arena (**21**). **Floriann** is the youngest. Imelda wants her to be educated as a lady and make a good marriage (she fancies a titled grandson). **Elimy**, the third, was always a tomboy and is now a promising cutpurse. She, too, hangs around the Arena (**21**) and accompanies her father (Harben (**33d**)) to the Cornucopia (to her mother's private dismay). Elimy's plans would surprise Imelda. She hopes to beat Floriann to it and catch a noble of her own, but, if all else fails, an up-and-coming adventurer would do. Although Harben tries to conceal it, Elimy has guessed their relationship and has no compunction about using it to her own ends.

VISITORS

33k **One-eyed Sadford**; M; Fr8; C/NE;
Cutlass; hp 32/36; AC 9/10

H
S 14 ☐ *Expensive but stained clothes, eyepatch*
I 13 ☐ *Merchant Captain, owner of Happy Mary and lesser ships, smuggler, regular gambler*
W 17
D 13 ☐ *Brutal, greedy, efficient, unpopular*
C 16 ☐ *Carries cargoes for Imelda Cottonwood (**33f**), knows Tom (**33e**) and Harben (**33d**) as well as many who appreciate fine wines, spirits and tobacco, bribes a number of officials. Sadford is attended by two bodyguards, F7 (hp 56/70 AC 2), who obey him in all things.*
Ch 8

33l **Vani 'Trust me' Vaniski**; M; Fr7; C/CN;
Sword-stick +4; hp 20/23; AC 9/10

G
S 7 ☐ *Blouson and trews, beautifully made; fresh-faced and honest-looking*
I 16
W 15 ☐ *Fence*
D 9 ☐ *Calculating, careful, suspicious, convincing*
C 8 ☐ *Seen and known as a social parasite around the flesh-pots of the League and Cerwyn; known as a trader in lands beyond (Xir, the Theocratic Principalities and even Kosre); works as a fence whose proud boast is that he can obtain **anything** – at a price; he can't actually, of course, but players are likely to be surprised by what he can come up with even though they're very unlikely ever to be able to afford it; expert with disguises – can make himself unrecognisable even to his 'friends'*
Ch 16

Almost any fairly important member of society might be seen here. Some come regularly, others only once. If you allow the party to frequent this site, be careful not to allow the players to ransack it just for fun because then you will have lost a valuable means of introducing the characters to interesting personalities at your discretion. Indeed adventurers who wantonly destroy this, or any other prime site, are likely to draw themselves to the attention of the Knights Ocular, as the Knights prefer things as they are — under control. The attention of the mysterious Knights is unlikely to improve their health.

Plotlines

1 It's possible to overhear Sadford arranging to take another party up-river to a 'lost-site-of-guaranteed-treasure' and your party might want to go along for the ride. Sadford never questions adventurers about their 'sites', but he knows when they are on a fools' errand.
2 A male member of your party is propositioned by Elimy — he may quite like it but you can rest assured that neither Tom, Harben nor Imelda will like it one little bit.
3 During a visit to the Cornucopia trouble erupts, and in the ensuing confusion something is thrust into the hand of a PC. The something is likely to be unidentifiable, but interesting, and the following days should be quite exciting as the owner seeks his property, the authorities seek some stolen goods and your party seek the answer to the riddle.

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Guy de Way

GAZETTEER of the COUNTY OF CERWYN

Those of you with long memories will remember how, when Pelinore was born, we promised you details of the lands around the City League. This issue contains the first instalment in the fulfilment of that promise. On this page you will find the official gazetteer of the County of Cerwyn. The gazetteer lists the important details that a DM will need to incorporate a particular place into the campaign, including all the towns and villages larger than a simple hamlet.

Following the gazetteer is an analysis of the town of Darkmoor, showing the important sites and listing the important NPCs. Now that you know the format we intend using for all these villages and towns, why not let us see your ideas of what some of the other places are like? Don't forget — Amfleat and Arncastle are 'no-go' areas, since they are to be left as areas where each and every individual DM can design as suits their version of the campaign; in other words, we will not publish details about these places even if they are submitted by readers.

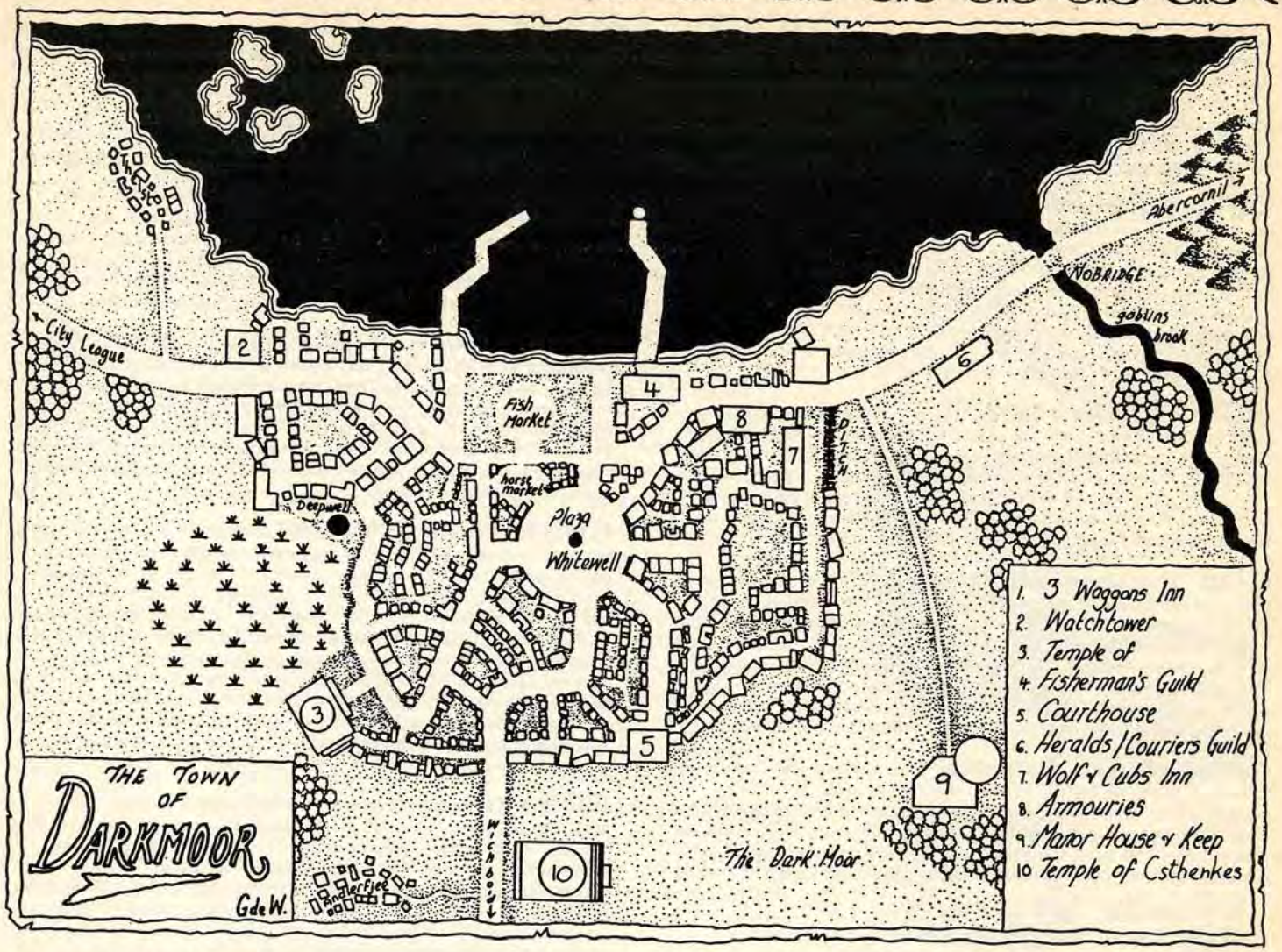
As usual, we have adopted a numbering code to describe places in Darkmoor; the code is made up of **C**erwyn, **D**arkmoor and a number. All-number codes, therefore, must be references to the City League.

If you do not want to wait for the details of a particular place to be written up in a full-scale article, it is quite possible to extract important information from the gazetteer below. So, for example, if you were to use the village of Kaantinnen, by looking at the table you would know that it is a village surrounded by a stone wall and ditch, ruled by a Burghermeister who answers to the Countess. The presence of the expensive wall implies a rich history and a position of strategic significance. Kaantinnen's population consists of about 100 Elves and 180 other demi-humans — but no humans. In fact, humans are going to be unwelcome in this village (perhaps something to do with relations with neighbouring Tirhalter, if you look through its stats). It is a community that makes a poor living from raids against others, both within and beyond the County. There is no County military presence, and no constabulary — perhaps lawbreakers in this violent village would be summarily dealt with. The community is not in regular contact with the rest of the world and so would know little of what is going on; equally, activities within the village are unlikely to have been heard of outside.

Name: From varied sources; the suffix -halter comes from a Dwarven word for an armed camp; Borth synonymous with shipbuilding; Preven known for wines; many Cerwyn citizens use their place of origin as part of their name, with the prefix *di-*, or just plain 'of'....
Size: Hamlets not listed — one every couple of miles or so, V = village (basic guilds), T = town (basic + trading guilds), LT = large town (+ relevant specialist guilds), C = city (any guild possible); **Guild of Heralds** has representative in every community larger than a Hamlet
Defence: Number describes type of wall, letter type of ditch; 1 = none, 2 = picket (5'), 3 = pallisade (10'), 4 = stone wall (10'), 5 = stone wall+towers (20'); A = none, B = ditch, C = moat
Ruler: Clan = ruler selected from dominant clan or family; Marshal = ruler nominated by suzerain, leading by charisma or force or by respect of populace for suzerain; Elder = senior member(s) of community followed by consensus; Guild = ruled by council of leading guildsmen, or dominated by one guild; Mayor = leader of a council elected by suffrage; Burg = (burghermeister) leader elected directly by suffrage; Seneschal = steward acting on behalf of suzerain, ruling with suzerain's authority. Some communities may have an exceptional, charismatic leader, eg the MU in Mamelok

Suzerain: C = Countess, CM = County Marshal, MH = Master of Horse, MM = Master of Magicks, HS = High Steward; brackets indicate rule in name only
Race mix: all human except as noted; N = mixed non-human races, 0% indicates dangerous for that race
Class max: highest level for each of the common classes shown; question mark indicates a variable (normally low) level; a zero indicates that no overt members of that class would normally be tolerated
Wealth: 1-5 = poor-wealthy; relative to the size of the community
Garrison: number before slash = approx number of fighters loyal to crown; number after = number of County Horse picketed there
Constabulary: number of civilian law enforcers
Religions: number of different religions with temples etc; * = sites of special religious significance (undefined), ★ = sites of very important religious significance
Notes: C = cosmopolitan, news travels fast, sophisticated population, efficient law-enforcement if required, mixed alignments (average N), A = average, mixed alignments (average N), I = isolated, news moves slowly, superstitious population, little come-back on PC behaviour, extreme alignment domination possible, unpredictable law-enforcement

Name	Size	Def	Ruler	Suz	Pop	Race mix	Class max	Wlth	Source/wealth	G'son	Const	Rels	Notes
Amberteak	T	3B	Clan	(C)	950	N80%	F6 MU/C/T5	3	Farming/Trade	50/0	8	1	A
Amburane	T	2A	Elder	CM	1100	E15% G5% ½5%	F5 MU3 C/T6	4	Farming	50/0	15	2	A
Amfleat	LT	4C	—	CM	—— — DM's discretion — —					50/0	—	—	A
Arncastle	LT	5C	—	MH	—— — DM's discretion — —					50/100	—	—	I
Borth	LT	1A	Guild	Ind	2000	N20%	F/MU/C12 T6	4	Fish/Shipping	50/0	25	3*	A
Bundock	V	4A	Guild	HS	500	N80%	F/MU/C/T5	5	Trade	0/0	50	10	C
Burghalter	V	4B	Clan	HS	125	E25% ½25%	F10 MU8 C10 T4	1	Trade	0/0	20	3**	I
Cipello	T	1A	Mayor	MH	750	N10%	F/MU6 C4 T3	4	Farming	50/0	75	2	A
Cloke	V	3B	Guild	HS	150	G50% N20%	F5 MU7 C4 T4	1	Lumber	0/0	5	1	A
Dahn	T	4B	Burg.	MH	1500	E30% D0%	F15 MU12 C5 T5	2	Trade	50/100	50	2	A
Darkmoor	LT	3A	Marshal	CM	2700	D20%	F9 MU? C6 T7	2	Fish/Farming	50/0	250	2	A
Deepvein	V	4B	Clan	Ind	550	D80% E0%	F9 MU3 C/T0	5	Mining	0/0	0	0	I
Gallivan	V	3B	Burg	(C)	450	E40% G10% ½25%	F6 MU7 C/T4	2	Farming	0/0	5	1**	I
Gallo	T	1A	Mayor	CM	1000	N10%	F/MU7 C4 T3	5	Farming	50/0	150	3	A
Galtry	V	1B	Guild	Cn	350	G35%	F/MU/C/T5	4	Wine	0/0	20	1	A
High Lygol	C	5C	CM	C	7500	N50%	??	5	Government	50/230	150	10**	C
Hyrpum	LT	2A	Mayor	MH	3000	E15% D5% G5%	F15 MU6 C8 T7	3	Farming	50/100	50	5*	A
Jarhalter	V	4B	Clan	(C)	500	N80%	F8 MU/C/T4	1	Farming	0/0	5	3*	I
Jarne	V	3B	Mayor	(C)	500	N50%	F7 MU2 C/T5	2	Trade	0/0	15	2	A
Juhll	V	1A	Guild	C	260	G15% E45%	F3 MU7 C17 T3	5	Wine	0/0	55	1★	C
Kaantinnen	V	4B	Burg	C	280	E35% N65% H0%	F10 MU5 C8 T4	1	Fighting	0/0	0	3	I
Mamelok	V	2A	MU	HS	125	E75%	F4 MU15 C0 T0	4	Magic	0/0	0	0	A
Markennis	V	1A	Guild	C	310	G30%	F/MU/C/T4	4	Wine	0/0	20	2	C
Newvines	V	1A	Guild	C	350	G35%	F/MU/C/T4	4	Wine	0/0	15	2	C
Oakhoft	V	3C	Clan	Ind	175	N10%	F/MU/C12 T5	1	Lumber/Fight	0/0	1	5	I
Osport	C	4B	HS	HS	7500	D50% N25%	F20 MU15 C/T9	5	Mining	300/300	150	5	C
Ossby	V	2B	Guild	C	180	D20% N20%	F5 MU/C4 T5	2	Trade	0/0	5	2*	A
Pollard	V	2C	Marshal	MH	210	E25% D0% G0%	F8 MU8 C2 T2	2	Farming/Trade	0/0	75	0	I
Preven	V	1A	Guild	C	250	G25% E25%	F5 MU6 C3 T5	5	Wine	0/0	35	2	C
Roseberry	T	3B	Guild	Ind	1400	N80%	F12 MU/C10 T9	2	Trade	50/0	25	7*	I
Sharifika	V	1A	Mayor	CM	500	N10%	F/MU5 C3 T2	4	Farming	0/0	20	2	A
Tellhalter	V	5C	Cleric	Ind	350	N5%	F/MU/C/T16	1	Fighting	0/0	0	1	I
Tirhalter	V	4C	Clan	Ind	300	E0% G0% D0%	F10 MU5 C8 T0	1	Fighting	0/0	0	1	I
Urma	V	4A	Clan	CM	175	½80%	F4 MU3 C4 T9	1	Farming	0/0	0	0	I
Wicbold	T	4C	Sens	CM	1250	E0% N25%	F15 MU0 C10 T6	2	Farming	50/0	25	3	A



Darkmoor is one of the closest towns to the City League, and one much passed through by adventurers on their way east. It has a population of approximately 2700, scratching a living from passing trade, fishing and some animal farming. Even so, PCs might be attracted to stay awhile; since the forests and hills just a few hours east contain many tribes of goblins, hobgoblins and gnolls — not to mention the brigands operating from the steppes beyond. DMs could locate all kinds of encounters and adventures within a day or so of the town....

The Town

Darkmoor is not a rich place. The dwarves and humans who live there are ruled by the County Marshal (on behalf of the Countess Flavia) through his representative, the Marshal Gasres (**CD 9a**). However, the garrison of County troops supposed to exist here has fallen to just 30, and the town has had to defend itself from the raids of humanoid species (three attacks in the last twenty years) through its own resources. The Town Meet pays 10,000gp a year to Riojar Andrej Luis (**CD 2a**), who maintains and trains a part-time militia of 250. There are few static defences, save a ring of houses with fortified outer walls, arrow-slits and a cleared area beyond, and two 25' towers. In an emergency, most of the citizens would fight, but forewarned of a big attack from the east, 60% of the population would flee to the City League.

The City is the major trading outlet for Darkmoor produce. The town was built when the bay was full of tasty Whidring fish, a local delicacy. These are long gone, and Darkmoor fishermen compete badly with those of Borth. Goat cheese, meat and horses form the majority of trade goods.

Darkmoor is built about a central open area — normally jammed with fishermen haggling with League buyers — and the through route League-Abercornil. Much of its life revolves around the Fish Market and the weekly Horse Market; the two fresh water wells; the Temple of Rissinis and the Courthouse. Most of the built up areas consist of slum dwellings, small shops, etc (this is equally true of the hamlets of Theist and Andlerfjee beyond the 'walls'), criss-crossed by narrow alleys.

Its sole peculiar feature is the Nobridge. Thirty-five years ago, a gnoll warband broke up when the bridge it was crossing vanished — turned invisible by a transient mage-adventurer. Perhaps he was a bit unstable, because he then made the illusion permanent. The bridge is crossed many times a day, but the DM might want to enforce an intelligence check before PCs cross it for the first time.

People

The population are fairly shrewd, and will try to overcharge strangers for most items on first acquaintance. They are largely neutral in alignment, with few thieves beyond petty cutpurses, and no permanent magic users. It will not be possible to hire them as extra sword-arms for adventures, but servants and retainers will come cheap. Rumours abound about all the treasure that has been brought down from the mountains by adventurers in the past — and of others who never came back. A counter-rumour of impending goblin attack will cause a riot, and the PCs will find themselves on the wrong side of the authorities once the 'joke' is revealed.

CD1 Three Wagons Inn: Probably the first port of call for newcomers. A travellers' resting place. Rooms for 1gp/night, cheap food, grim ale and no wine. Few locals come here, but hard-up adventurers might be offered escort work by merchants.

CD2 Militia Houses: The two watchtowers act as training centres and barracks for the militia. The western one also serves as HQ for the Fighters Guild — which is also under the control of Luis. The militia are all F1, AC5, hp4 with spears and shortswords. They do not function beyond Luis' explicit orders, and maintain order in the town in a casual and arbitrary manner.

CD2a Riojar Andrej Luis; Militia Leader;
M; F7; N; AC 0; hp 35/43; S 15, D 18, Ch 16; uses **longbow +3**, longsword; **ring of charm person** (18 charges)
Luis is making a good living from this place (he is secretly buying a huge house in the City League by instalments), and will react immediately if anyone tries to take over. He will use his charisma (or his ring, which is a very rare item given to him by a previous employer) to keep the Town Council on his side, and if ousted, will arrange for information about merchants' shipments to reach some bandits he knows of. His successors will thus start off with a string of failures on their records.

CD3 The Temple of Rissinis: Aborekket (**CD 3a**) and eleven acolytes (C1, AC 5, hp 4, tridents or maces) run the temple, which is dedicated to the LN fishing deity of Cerwyn and the rest of the Domains. All curative and water-related spells (up to 3rd level) are available here at 75gp/level, with modifiers of x2 for Good, x3 for Evil and x5 for Chaotic characters (cumulative). First time vistors requiring spells must drink at a fountain, which will reveal the alignment of the drinker.

CD3a Aborekket; Chief Priest of Temple;
M; C6; LN; AC 7; hp 30; W 16; C 16; **trident +3**, mace; **ring of regeneration**; usually memorises curative spells
Aborekket hates competing clerics. Before the arrival of the Temple of Csthenkes (**CD10**), Rissinis was the only deity worshipped in Darkmoor, and Aborekket does not want any more competition. If a cleric seeks his professional help it will only be granted to those of LN alignment with a charisma of 15+. Should a PC actually be a follower of Rissinis, then Aborekket will be obsequious and charming.

CD4 Fishermen's Guild: This is the local HQ for this world-spanning brotherhood. Mostly, it acts as a clearing house for the fisher fleets, putting sellers in touch with buyers. Large sums of money (d6x1000gp) accumulate here on deposit until catches are shipped out, kept in a strongroom with an iron door, thick walls and a stout lock (Lvl 2 Sliding or -10% Open Locks). Four local bravos are normally hired to watch the place during the night (F1-2; AC 3; shortswords).

CD5 The Courthouse/Meethouse: The administrative centre of Darkmoor, a competing authority to the Marshal Gasres. A yearly poll elects a Council of Ten to handle local taxation, the militia, justice and relations with the City League. Taxes are a 10gp, annual head tax; the militia mops up the money; justice is cursory but usually lenient (use **Law & Order** tables from #19, treating Darkmoor as Guild Militia, and giving the Court modifiers of 85 on **Before The Beak** and -10 on **Going Down**); and relations with the League are one-sided....

CD5a Matrexes di Regines; Landowner, Head **Councillor**;
F; Fr5; LN; AC 6; hp 15/20; I 14
Matrexes is in her second term. Her administration is no different from any recent predecessor, handing over responsibility for defence to Luis. She is unlikely to change and thus the decline of the town will probably continue. Very popular with the voters, she has the key support of three others on the Council.

CD5b Carrodine of Kosre; Horse Trader, Councillor;
M; F4; LE; AC 2; hp 20/25; S 15; C 4; **battleaxe +1**
An ex-soldier, now an exile, Carrodine is the victim of a **curse** which has left him prey to all manner of diseases. There is a 75% chance of him missing a Meet, which is a pity since two other councillors follow him, and he has suspicions of Luis' activities.

CD5c Raf Oresdeep; Councillor;
F; Dw6/F6; LG; AC 1; hp 25; S 18(66); D 15; **two-handed sword +2**; **chain +1**; **shield +1**
Oresdeep looks after the interests of the Dwarvish minority, and does it very well. Two others sit on the Council with her, and the excellent work of the Dwarves in building has shored up the town. Known opponent of Carrodine and disagrees with everything he says — but also concerned about Luis. Sister of Raf Delvefar (**CD7a**).

CD6 Messengers & Couriers Guildhouse: The Messengers & Couriers Guild operates a series of watch stations along the road to Abercornil, at five-league intervals. This End-station houses 20 Couriers (Fr3; AC 7; hp 10; longswords) and has a stable for two dozen fast horses. They keep the road safe (-ish), and act as a banking service for adventurers from the League, transferring funds from their offices to like premises in the City, where it can be held until collected.

CD6a Landrennian ('Fast Lanny'); Herald;
M; F7/R7; LG; AC -2; hp 31/36; S 16; W 15; D 16; C 16; Ch 16; **shield +3**, **longsword +2**, 3x **potion of speed**, **potion of extra-healing**.
Sharp, bright and very agile, Landrennian has been good at everything he has ever tried, from his early days as a thief in the City League, to a reforming stint as a member of the County Horse, to an eight year adventuring career in the Splintered Lands, to this job, Guild Officer for the Heralds in NE Cerwyn. These days, he doesn't get involved when fights break out, or when there's a dispute between the Council and the Marshal Gasres. But if the chips were down, he might be the best person to turn to. He has treasure to the value of 12,500gp kept at the Guildhouse, savings he intends to use to marry Niori (**CW2** — see **Wicbold**) and to build a new farm out in the wilderness.

CD7 The Wolf & Cubs Inn: Raf Delvefar runs a good hostelry. He knows adventurers have money, and this is the place in Darkmoor to spend it. Name your vice, Delvefar will supply. It's pricey (twice normal), but a hotbed of rumours and useful tips. 0-1 MUs, 0-2 Clerics, 1-4 Thieves and 1-10 Fighters can normally be found here, and they will sign on for adventures. Delvefar also boasts that you can leave anything in your room here, and it won't be stolen.

Cd7a Raf Delvefar; Publican;
M; T7; CG; AC -1; hp 25; S16, D 18, Ch 16; **dagger +2**, **leather armour +3**, **ring of protection +2**, **ring of invisibility**, access to d6 magical items 'borrowed' from guests
Delvefar is not short of money (cash, gems, etc worth 10,000gp are cached in five secret compartments in his quarters), and rarely steals these days. He does have a ready market for miscellaneous magical items however, and there is a 25%/day chance that he will succumb to the temptation to 'lift' the belongings of a PC. Normally very friendly, and can sell 'hot' items for 50% value. Brother of Raf Oresdeep.

CD8 Armourers: The most important 'trade' guild in town, producing only leather armour, mostly aprons and gloves for various working-folk in Darkmoor. They are pretty good at their job, and can manufacture goods of great quality for normal prices. A speciality of theirs is to make very supple leather gloves which can be worn "while even the most dextrous work is performed" and which are 50% likely to resist being pierced by a needle in the meantime.... Just 250gp the pair, cash up front, six week wait.

CD9 Manor House/County Garrison: This fortified stone manor house, with its keep, food stores and signal beacon is supposed to be the visible form of the County Marshal's authority in these parts. Alas, his representative is the Marshal Gasres. Kanwas Gasres, on the last step of a long climb towards noble status, has fallen victim to old age and indecision. Thus, this difficult part of the County is now not only geographically distant from the centre, but politically as well. The garrison (30 F1-2, AC 3; pikes and longswords) has dwindled through desertion and neglect, and morale is poor. The precept that the Marshal is supposed to serve on the local community to raise money for County administration has not been served for three years and the garrison has been paid out of the Marshal's funds; he is now nearly destitute.

CD9a Kanwas Gasres; Marshal of the County;
M; F9; LN; AC 0; hp 45/55; S 13, W 7, C 6; **longsword +3 (Int 14, Ego 20, LN, detect chaos, detect undead, +5 vs undead)**, **plate mail +1**, **shield protection from normal missiles +3**, **medallion of ESP**
Kanwas is 78, and increasingly senile. For long periods he will be under the control of his sword *Lifesheart*, which has only one aim, that being to be transferred to someone better able to wield it against undead. It is manipulating Kanwas to find a suitable mate for his grandson or granddaughter, who can be given the sword as a wedding gift. Thus, it is known that the Marshal is looking to marry his grandchildren off, and there will be 1-3 suitors at the manor at any one time, each LN and of levels 5-8. None, however, has yet met Kanwas' own stipulation — that the prospective spouse give him 20,000gp to pay off the garrison, and to return to High Lygol to see out his days. Should a PC suitor come forward with the money, the marriage will be rushed through. Alas, all are being misled. Although the title of Marshal is hereditary, the old man has decided that it will go to whichever of his grandchildren marries second; thus the PC will end up with *Lifesheart*, a graceless spouse, and will remain as far away from being one of the County nobility as before.

CD9b Krisnetta Gasres; no profession;
F; Fr 7; LE; AC 9/10; hp 21/28; cosmetics of a magical nature appear to make her Ch 18 — they take five hours to apply correctly.
Krisnetta hates Darkmoor, and intends to leave at the first opportunity, be it marriage, the death of her grandsire, or whatever. She is selfish, noisy and otherwise thoroughly unremarkable.

CD9c Bregan Gasres; no profession
M; F1-Fr7; LN; AC 5; hp 27/35; I 7; **longbow +1**
Bregan is dense, listless and useless. If he ends up in charge there is the distinct possibility that things could get even worse....

CD10 Temple of Csthenkes: Csthenkes is a Neutral deity whose province is misery. Its philosophy is fatalistic, morbid and soporific. About 25% of the population of Darkmoor have turned to this cheerless deity; served by 20 spiritless acolytes in a grey temple, offering purified food from rubbish tips to the poor. Csthenkes worshippers will be found mostly among the most uninteresting members of the community, and the acolytes are all C1, AC 7, hp 2, armed with no more than their ability to make all human endeavour seem utterly futile.

C10a Dedderrek; Acolyte
M; C1; N; AC 7; hp 4
Dedderrek tells adventurers he has something important to pass on. He has. Anyone spending more than a few seconds in his company has a 15% chance of catching a miserable disease; save vs poison or be helplessly sick for d4 days, check every d4 weeks. Many poor people in Darkmoor have it too....

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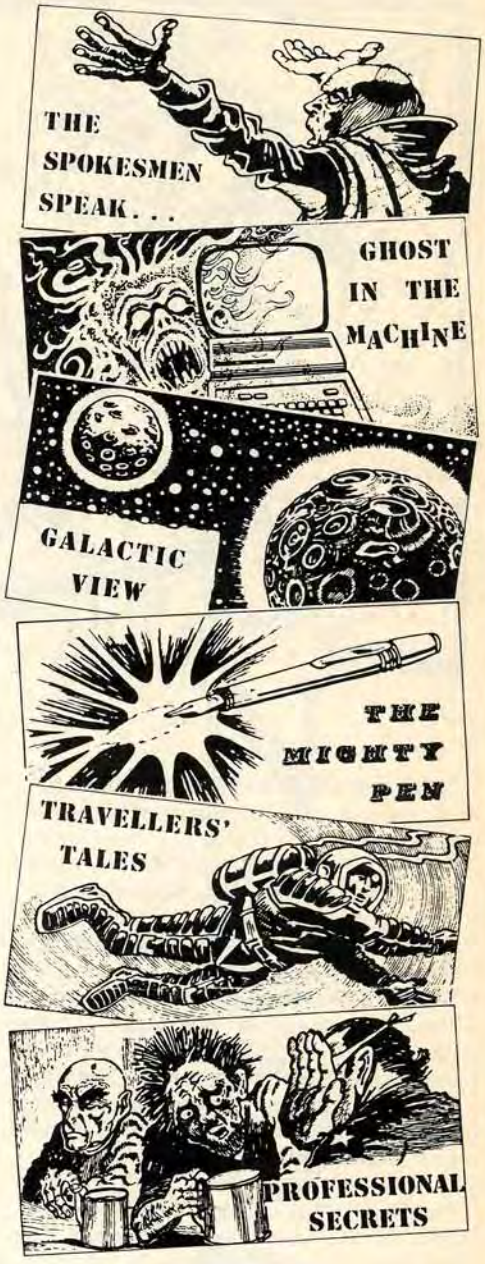

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OGRE MAGI

A new monster/ character class for your campaign

The Ogre Magi of the **Monster Manual** are not the only form of Japanese ogre, but are the highest of these forms. In Japanese, the general term for ogres and goblins is Bakemono. Normal **AD&D®** game goblins would be Bakemono-sho, AD&D ogres would be O-Bakemono and lantern/stone goblins Bakemono-toro. The Ogre-Magi are called Dai-Bakemono. They dress as do the Buke — the Japanese aristocracy — and are generally clean and well-mannered. The Dai-Bakemono pride themselves on their cultured senses and consider themselves as true warriors.

The Ogre Magi can be used a monster, race or character class, as desired. The information below expands on the initial information given in the **Monster Manual**

I. Ogre Magi must be of Evil alignment; 70% are Lawful Evil but they can be Neutral Evil (15%) or Chaotic Evil (15%).

II. All have 60' Infravision, with good day vision and excellent night sight.

III. All move 12" per round on foot and when flying they move at 15" and have aeriel manoeuvrability class B.

IV. Ogre Magi characters have a Strength and Intelligence of at least 14. Their racial characteristics add one to both Strength and Intelligence and subtract one from Wisdom and Constitution.

V. All have ten-sided hit dice till they reach 10th level, then they add 1 point per new level.

VI. All the Dai-Bakemono are literate and can speak their own tongue, the common language and their individual alignment language, along with goblin and ogre. They may also add one extra language for each Intelligence point above 14.

VII. Ogre Magi's racial thieving modifiers are as follows: Pickpockets -5%, Move Silent +5%, Hear Noise +5%, Read Languages +5%.

VIII. As a character class, the Ogre-Magi has a 1% chance of being a split class — Ogre Magi/Cleric — and may not combine with any other type of class.

IX. All Ogre Magi regenerate at a rate of 1 hit point per level per round. Separated limbs do not re-grow but may be re-attached.

X. Ogre Magi have the same weapon proficiencies as fighters.

XI. All Dai-Bakemono can **fly** for 2 turns per level per day, can cast **invisibility** (as per magic-user spell) on themselves twice per day, can cause **darkness 1" radius** three times per day per level and can polymorph into and out of humanoid form thrice per level per day.

XII. On reaching 40 years of age, a Dai-Bakemono's teeth, tusks and horn have become hard enough to combine a butting/biting attack for 1d4 damage.

XIII. Dai-Bakemono prefer using two-handed weapons, these usually being one or more of the following:

i) the No-Dachi — the No-Dachi classes as a bastard sword for Ogre Magi.
ii) the Tetsubo — in the hands of an Ogre Magi this does 1d10 damage.
iii) the Naginata — doing 1d10 damage.
iv) the Dai-Kyu 'Great Bow' — which classes as a 4-man bow.

XIV. When a Dai-Bakemono reaches 12th level, he becomes a Bakemono-Kunshu (Bakemono Lord). The Bakemono Kunshu are the most culturally aesthetic of the goblins and ogres, always seeking personal power and usually maintaining some form of hideout in a disused temple or abandoned keep, served by retainers — as would be a fighter of the same level — and entertained by guests and slaves. At 16th level the Lord gains additional retainers, these being:

i) 1d4 3rd level fighters or
ii) 1d3 3rd level Ogre Magi or
iii) one Penanggalan.

XV. Ogre Magi have light-blue, light-green, pale yellow or pale brown skins, their skin darkening as they grow older. Their hair colour is normally one of the skin tints, for example an Ogre Magi with green skin may have blue, yellow or brown hair, though it is usual for green- and blue-skinned Ogre Magi to have respectively blue- and green-coloured hair. Pale yellow skins are very rare. Those with brown skins usually have dark yellow hair and occasionally have jet-black hair. Common Ogre Magi have black nails, nobles having white. They all have very bright white teeth and tusks. The eyes of the Dai-Bakemono are variously coloured dark shades, usually red, blue, maroon, green, black or purple, with white or off-white iris. Female Ogre Magi are usually scarlet with yellow hair and are more rare.

XVI. Ogre Magi live for up to 200 years and use the 'halflings' column on page 13 of the DM's guide for ageing modifiers. Ogre Magi start being 23 + 2d10 years old and approximately 9' 5" tall.

by David Knowles

DRAGON LORE

OF CHINA AND JAPAN

by Carole Morris

The cultures of Ancient China and Japan were not the products of one native people. They grew out of the lives and ideas of many tribes, and the myths and legends of these peoples were amalgamations of ideas accumulated from many quarters, widely different in space and time. One can always find variations of legends concerning mythical creatures, customs and folklore. Imported elements were often fused with national ideas. In the **DEITIES & DEMIGODS®** Cyclopaedia (or should I now call it **Legends and Lore** — good title that, eh?), the mythology of China is said to be so vast that it is impossible to cover it adequately and stay within size restrictions (p37). This statement is very true — you could almost say that the Chinese had a deity for anything and everything! It would probably take hundreds more issues of **IMAGINE™** magazine just to skim the surface of the tales of gods and heroes of China and Japan. So, I have decided to choose a small, but colourful and interesting group of Oriental beasties — the dragons.

Dragons appear in the works of Ancient Chinese and Japanese writers and are also illustrated in many forms in books, on sculptures, textiles and porcelain. The Chinese dragon is a strange mixture of several other creatures. The writer Wang Fu said that a dragon had the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the stomach of a clam, the scales of a carp, the claws of an eagle and the soles of a tiger's feet. On its head it had a *chi'ih muh* — a kind of inflated lump that enabled it to fly and soar through the air. This description allows there to be many possible creature combinations. Indeed, there were horse-, snake-, cow-, toad-, dog- and fish-dragons etc. All animals which had scales, feathers or hair were more or less associated by the ancient Chinese with the dragon. The only creature which seemed never wholly to be combined with a dragon was the tiger, and this could be explained by the fact that the tiger was the dragon's mortal enemy. Most dragons were divine. They were deities of water and rain, while the tigers were deities of mountains and wind.

Dragons' bodies (according to Wang Fu) had three jointed parts and their hides were made up of 117 scales. 81 of these had good influence (the Chinese good spirit or *yang*) and 36 had bad influence (the Chinese bad spirit or *yin*). The dragon was therefore looked on as both a Preserver and a Destroyer, and some of the legends involving dragons illustrate this. Under his neck, the dragon's scales are reversed, and he has five claws on each foot. The male dragon can be distinguished by his whiskers, the undulating shape of his horn which is wider in the upper part, and by a lustrous pearl lodged under his chin or carried in his throat. Dragons and pearls are closely connected, as we shall see.

As well as being associated with different creatures, Chinese and Japanese dragon-gods often appeared in polymorphed forms, sometimes as a youth or old man, sometimes as a beautiful maiden or old woman, and sometimes as creatures such as rats, snakes, fish, or inanimate objects such as trees, swords or other implements.

Dragons hatched from beautiful-coloured stones. In Ancient China, certain beautiful stones were called dragons' eggs and it was believed that when they split, lightning flashed, thunder roared, darkness fell and water poured out from the stone. Then, the new-born dragon (no larger than a lizard) flew into the sky. The 6th century work *Shu i ki* tells how a snake could grow into a dragon. A watersnake living for 500 years turns into a *kiao*, and after another 500 years the kiao changes into a *lung (kiao-lung* is a fish-dragon with fish-like scales (similar to the *Yu Lung* of the **FIEND FOLIO™** Tome p30). After 500 years, the lung metamorphoses into a kioh-lung (horned dragon) and after another 500 years, the cycle is complete and the kioh-lung emerges as a *ying-lung* (winged dragon). By FF standards (p27), the Chinese ying-lung is by this time a very ancient dragon!

Whatever shape they assumed, mythical Oriental dragons were always closely associated with anything to do with water, rain, thunder and storms. The Japanese *p'an lung* or coiled dragon was able to control large quantities of water (see the *Pan Lung* of the FF for its **AD&D®** game equivalent). Some dragons were known as Rainlords and Gods of Thunder. In the DDG/LL, Chih Sung-Tzu is the lord of rain and appears as a muscular man (p38), and Lei Kung is the Duke of Thunder and appears as a man with smoking black skin and eyes like lightning bolts (p40).

Dragons tended to live in deep pools of water. They would rise up to the surface, soar towards the clouds, create thunder, bring rain and flood rivers. Those that lived in the seas and oceans controlled the tides. In Japanese legends, dragons were the guardians of treasure and especially the pearl grounds under the sea. The Japanese dragon king of the

ocean possessed pearls which were the 'jewels that grant all desires' and the 'jewels of ebb and flow'. Dragon-king Oho-Watatsumi (sometimes known as Toyo-tama hiko no Mikoto or the Prince of Many Pearls) had a watery kingdom at the bottom of the sea. The 'jewel of ebb' was a brilliant white pearl while the 'jewel of flow' was deep blue in colour. The Japanese Empress Jingo once persuaded a dragon-god of the sea to drown an enemy Korean army using such pearls of ebb and flow. During storms at sea, sailors even used to throw jewels into the sea to pacify the dragon-king. (Are there any of you out there who haven't had to part with your favourite gems in a sticky situation with a dragon?)

The palace of the Japanese dragon-king in the Underworld could be entered through a deep mountain cave or a dragon-guarded well. In some Chinese stories, the dragon palace is located below a faraway island in the Eastern Sea which cannot be approached easily by ships. The waves crash against the island's steep crags, and when the tide is high, the island is covered with water.

Dragon-wells were usually situated inside deep mountain caves. A famous dragon-well is situated on top of Mount Pien in Hu-cheu. It flows from a cave and is known as the Golden Well Spring. Golden Well Cave is said to be so deep that no one can reach the end of it. Dragons were also closely associated with waterfalls. They haunted the deep pools below the waterfalls in one or other of their forms, for example, fishes such as carp, eels and salmon.

Water was held to be both a life-giving and a destroying force — hence the dragon is a preserver and a destroyer at the same time. The water of life and the tree of life were closely connected. A dragon could assume the shape of a tree growing under water and often chose to take the form of pine trees. When a pine becomes very old, it is covered with scales of bark and in the end changes into a dragon. By night, 'dragon lanterns' (ie *ignis fatuus*) are seen on pine trees in marshy areas and also on the masts of ships at sea.

In China, the season of drought is Winter. The dragons are then supposed to be asleep in their pools because of the dry weather. The dragons hide themselves in the water and sleep to preserve their bodies. They stir and rise up in the Spring and begin to fight one another. A dragon battle after a dry season is a thunderstorm when the rain pours down in torrents. If a large number of dragons fight simultaneously, and the battle goes on for a long time, the rivers rise in flood and cause great destruction. A superstition held that no mortal should gaze upon a dragon battle since this was both unlucky and deadly.

A Chinese emperor was thought to be an incarnation of the dragon-god. According to an old Chinese conception of the world, the emperors were supposed to be holy beings on earth, and the idea of the dragon being the symbol of imperial power was based on this. Since the emperors were so closely connected with the dragon-gods, the great destruction, loss of life and social upheaval caused by flooding were believed to be the result of the emperor's and priests' failure to control the dragons. A whole dynasty could be overthrown by unrest in this way.

Both Chinese and Japanese dragons were associated with precious metals, jewels, stones and pearls:

In Japanese historical records, the Emperor Hwang brought a dragon down to earth so that he could ride on it. He did this by gathering copper on a mountain and casting a tripod from the molten metal (some material component!). The dragon then descended and let him ride. He also prepared a potion of immortality or *soma* by melting cinnabar (dragon's blood or mercuric sulphide). Copper, in China, has associations with darkness and death. The Stone of Darkness was a hollow stone which contained either water or the 'vital spirit of copper'. Dragons were fond of these stones as well as beautiful gems.

Iron, on the other hand, was anathema to dragons. In Japan, if iron and filth were flung into dragon pools, the dragons would rise up and raise hurricanes that devastated the land. In China, iron was regarded as a protection against dragons. According to Wang Fu in the *'Rh ya yih*, dragons dreaded iron because it had a pungent nature and injured their eyes. When the Chinese wanted to raise a dragon because they wanted rain, they made a great noise and threw iron into dragon pools. The dragons would then rise up to protect their eyes.

Dragon-gods of water, rain and thunder were associated with gold of various colours (the colours were references to gold fused with other metals). There were red, yellow, white, blue and black gold dragons. An old Chinese text has the following passage:

'When the yellow dragon, born from yellow gold a thousand years old, enters a deep place, a yellow spring dashes forth; and if from this spring some particles arise, these become a yellow cloud. In the same way blue springs and blue clouds originate from blue dragons, born from blue gold eight hundred years old; red, white and black springs and clouds from red, white and black dragons born from gold of the same colours a thousand years old.'

There were five dragon-gods who presided over the seasons. The Dragon of the East was blue and was associated with spring rains. The Dragon of the West was white and was associated with autumn fruitfulness. The Dragons of the South were red and yellow and presided over the Summer, while the Dragon of the North was black and was the harbinger of the winter drought. When the dragons had their battles in the skies, fire-balls and pearls fell to the ground. Pearls gave the promise of abundant supplies of water in the future. If the agriculture was to prosper and crops grow well, the blue and yellow dragons should prevail over the rest.

Dragons were life-givers in healing as well as in rain, fertility etc. Certain herbs such as Red Cloud Herb and Dragon's Liver (a species of gentian) could be found after thunderstorms by the side of dragon pools. Fossil bones were always called dragon bones and were used in Chinese medicine. The dragons were supposed to cast off their bones as well as slough their

skins, and there was an island on which dragon bones could be found. A bone of all five colours was the most effective, then white and yellow. Black was inferior. A Chinese tract called the *Shu King* tells that blue, yellow, red, white and black dragon bones corresponded to different internal organs and helped cure illnesses of them.

Dragon pearls were very valuable and most stories about pearls have dragons in them somewhere. In the Shu i ki, dragons were said to spit out pearls. They carried pearls worth a hundred pieces of gold in their mouths, under their throats or in their pools. The 'thunder pearls' which drop from dragons' mouths when they fight in the sky illuminate houses at night. There were also dragon-gods of light. A black dragon could vomit light and turn darkness into light. Even when dragon skins were cast off, they shone at night like the pearls. An old Chinese custom was to carry in procession on the 15th day of the first month of the year, a dragon made from paper, bamboo and linen. In front of it was carried a red ball. The Chinese called this the 'Pearl of Heaven', ie the moon. The dragons were moon- and sun-devourers who caused eclipses, but were also guardians of the moon in their capacities as gods of the four quarters (seasons). Dragon-pearl Peak (Ryushuho) is a mountain in Japan associated with a Buddhist temple called Cloud-dragon Shrine in legend. When the temple was being built, a dragon carrying a pearl in its mouth appeared before one of the priests and the mountain and sanctuary were henceforth known by dragon names.

Magical swords were often possessed by the spirits of dragon-gods. These dragon swords could be owned and used by mortals, but only for short periods. Stories are told of swords being taken away by dragon-gods and even of swords leaping of their own accord into rivers and oceans, assuming dragon shape again as they hit the water. The Kusanagi sword was a famous Japanese sword of this type used by the emperors, was placed in a temple for part of its life, and was finally carried back to the palace of the dragon-god in his kingdom under the sea.

All in all, the Chinese and Japanese ideas about dragons are a long way from smoky old Smaug on his heap of gold (though most of them seem to have had a penchant for jewels and pearls!). As well as being fearsome creatures, dragons were intimately linked with practically every facet of life and were just as much a force for good as ill. Even so, Bilbo said, 'Never laugh at live dragons!'.

Carole Morris

Works consulted:

The Dragon in China and Japan: W M W de Visser
The Religious System of China: De Groot
Myths of China and Japan: D A MacKenzie

DISPEL CONFUSION

Role-playing games have rules which are open to interpretation, and this sometimes causes problems when two gamers interpret things differently. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games; while the answers we give are not fully official we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience.

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9"x 4" SSAE.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Will the spell **animate dead** work on the corpses of monsters, for example kobolds or minotaurs, and animate them as 2HD zombies? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. The answer as far as the AD&D game is concerned is very simple — yes, despite the fact that the description of the second level clerical spell indicates that it will only work on the bodies of humans. The notes in the DMG (p41) are quite clear, and contradict the PHB, but as usual the DMG takes precedence.

In the D&D game, however, things are not so simple. A cleric can animate one hit die of dead body per level, and the body can be of any type of creature. Thus a minotaur (6HD) can be animated by a 6th level cleric as a 6HD skeleton or 7HD zombie. Confusion may arise because a character such as a 9th level thief or 12th level fighter is animated as a 1HD skeleton or 2HD zombie. In this case the body is treated as though it had formerly been a Normal Man.

Q. If a character drinks a **potion of diminution** will any parasites shrink as well, or will they stay at their original size? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. Thankfully, the parasites — rot grubs, for example, in the Advanced game — will shrink as well. As parasites, such creatures are a part of the host's system, and thus suffer all the effects of potions and the like.

Whether parasites are affected by spells which have an area of effect of 'one creature' or 'the creature touched' is open to debate. By the exact wording of such spells they should not be affected but, if only for simplicity's sake, we suggest that the presence of any parasites is ignored for spell purposes. In at least one case, parasites *must* be affected by 'one creature' spells, otherwise casting invisibility on somebody would produce a hazy outline of the person, caused by bacteria and other parasites floating around in the bloodstream.

Q. What exactly is meant by the terms 'human', 'demi-human' and 'humanoid'? Aren't they the same thing? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. Definitions as to what the various terms mean in the games are quite confused at times, partly because the rules have been under revision since they were first published.

'Human' means just that, a member of the species homo sapiens, regardless of other considerations. 'Humanoid' should literally mean all beings that are man-like (or woman-like) in form — one head, two arms, two legs — but in practice the word is limited to evil anthropomorphic beings (orcs, goblins, gnolls and the rest) rather than elves and dwarves.

Elves, dwarves and halflings are referred to as 'demi-human' in the Basic rules — something a bit closer to 'human' than 'humanoid', but definitely not pure human. In the Advanced game, these three races, plus gnomes, half-elves and half-orcs, are closest of all to the human standard of shape and facial appearance, hence the distinction between them and the more obviously unhuman humanoid monsters such as gnolls.

Q. How experienced must a cleric be to cast a **glyph of warding** for paralysis or energy drain? *(Advanced)*

A. Glyphs for these and other effects may be cast by clerics who can also cast spells with similar effects. So, for example, a **glyph of energy draining** can only be cast by a cleric of level 16 or higher (energy drain is the reverse of the 7th level spell restoration). Taking **paralysis** as the equivalent of a **hold person**, means that this effect is available to any cleric who can cast a glyph in the first place.

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher & Graeme Morris

ILLUMINATIONS

COWIE, CLAIRVOYANT

'Why didn't you mention Avalon Hill/Victory Games in your Toy Fair summary of I24?' said an indignant Ensign telephone handset the other day. Actually it was the voice of Michael Hodge, AH UK's supremo, connected by the magic of metal wire from distant London, talking to me through the finely sculpted plastic instrument. Beating down the desire to ask him what a man of his age was doing reading IMAGINE™ magazine, I let him into a Trade Secret. I wrote the Toy Fair piece in advance of the event. Heaven knows why I waste my prescience on **Illuminations** readers, when half of them don't like my column (**Readers Survey** #24). I think it's my paternalistic desire to inform and, er, illuminate. Anyway, although the forecasts in I24 were accurate, they were incomplete, as Mike Hodge lost no time in pointing out. So, let's right the shameful wrong and see what AH/VG have to offer.

Stopping by at the usual dead-letter box, I found that Victory Games of New York had made a drop. Substantial amounts of new supplementary material for the **James Bond 007** rpg are now available through Official Channels. There are a couple of Adventure Modules: **The Man With the Golden Gun** where Bond faces Scaramanga, a sort of upmarket Lone Ranger (he uses golden bullets). Then there is **Goldfinger 2**. This is billed as 'not based on any book or movie'. It can be played on its own or as a sequel to **Goldfinger**. A word of warning. It's not advisable to be a scientist in either adventure. Nuff said. The modules retail at £7.80 each.

Thrilling Locations is a James Bond supplement which brings a touch of conspicuous consumption to our humdrum lives. This svelte book, teeming with the novelty of photographic illustrations, gives detailed descriptions of (I quote) *'elegant restaurants, preeminent (sic) lodgings and sumptuous travel accommodations'*. In short, it allows us to take a vicarious glimpse of a world hitherto only experienced by TSR managing directors. Floorplans, encounter tables (turning a corner you meet Ian Livingstone: Special Attacks: autographing, smiling. Weakness: Falling off his wallet); NPCs, the whole works, and based on settings from the books and films. £9.50.

Victory Games have also announced a series of **James Bond Action Episodes**. These are a bit of a novelty, being designed for 8-year-olds and above. They are easy to learn and contain mounted maps and cardboard figures with plastic bases. Due for a Spring release are the first four, based on the first four JB Adventure Modules. Retailing at £8.95 each. Victory also announce that there will be a module based on the forthcoming Bond movie **A View to Kill**.

Another VG release is **Purple Heart** module for Ambush. While not an rpg in the accepted sense of the term, this game is of interest since it is designed entirely for solo play and gives players command of a small group of WWII infantry (about the same number as are present in most parties of adventurers, as it happens). Thus, although combat is emphasised, the player assumes the character of the squad sergeant and so the game is (triumphant climax of a tortuous argument) virtually an rpg. Purple Heart provides add-on components to the basic game: more maps, counters etc, plus the all-important Missions. Six of these are provided, allowing play to take place in various settings in wartime Europe.

Avalon Hill have some interesting Spring releases planned. There are two **Dune** modules, **Spice Harvest** and **The Duel**; **Perilous Lands** and **Book of Tables** for **Powers & Perils**; and **Monster Coliseum** for **RQ3**. Finally a **Diplomacy** genre game, **Pax Britannica** is one to look for. It's set in the period 1880-1914 and can accommodate from 4 to 7 players in a worldwide game of national self-assertion. £24.95.

Doug Cowie

News of Small Pieces

I know a few people will be very pleased to hear that Grenadier Models UK Ltd will definitely be importing the products of Gamelords Ltd. The two principal items from this company are **Thieves Guild** and **Haven, The Free City**. I have in front of me the latest, boxed versions of both of these, still shrink-wrapped and looking decidedly tempting. So, in the interests of enlightening my reader, I shall violate the pristine wraps...

Thieves Guild (headed 'completely revised second edition' and sporting a nice new illustration to prove it) is revealed to consist of three booklets plus various maps and plans. It gives the impression of consisting of all there is to know about running thief characters. Haven's new box is not so immediately attractive as TG's. The contents, however, are perhaps of more universal appeal. It contains *nine* booklets, ten A4 street plans on thin card and a colour, fold-out map of the City and environs. TG and Haven are both high quality items which deserve to be widely available in Britain.

Gamelords also produce nine supplements for the Thieves Guild system along with four Campaign Modules for Haven; a couple of generic, linked fantasy adventures and a whole stack of **Traveller** adventures. These publications will be imported as well. No idea of price yet; suffice it to say that nothing coming from the US is cheap by the time it's on sale in Britain, but Grenadier hope to keep the price down as much as possible despite the sickly state of the pound.

Grenadier also have six new sets in their UK-produced Fantasy Lords blister pack range. These are **Armoured Dragonmen** to complement the existing unarmoured ones; **Undead Orcs** which are a nifty new line in skeletons; **St George and the Dragon** (quite a *little* dragon); **Dart Thrower and Undead Crew**; another **Skeleton Cavalryman**, this time with barded horse and a foot figure, and a pack of **Familiars and Homoculi** to decorate ad enhance character figures.

Tolkien Miniatures

Citadel's new **Middle Earth Figures** will be available shortly as will those of Grenadier. It will be interesting to see how these two companies interpret Tolkien's classic characters and creatures in metal. Both ranges will be available in the UK, since the licences from Tolkien Enterprises granted both manufacturers worldwide rights. Grenadier's will be manufactured in Britain and the USA, the range kicking off with two boxes of character figures.

Tolkien Inspired Releases

A couple of new releases from Iron Crown Enterprises have reached me. **Lonely Mountain** is a board game for 1-6 players. It's another Tolkien inspired effort. The game features a map of Smaug's lair. Players control parties of adventurers. They can be Dwarves, Men, Elves, Orcs or Freebooters (I think Freebooters are people who go around kicking things without paying for the privilege but I could be wrong). Each party consists of Mages, Animists, Bards, Rangers, Scouts, Archers and Fighters. The idea is to sneak into the lair, lift as much loot as possible and escape before Smaug wakes up and bites your legs off. In case this sounds too easy, be warned. There are plenty of other nasties about, to discomfort the intrepid players while Smaug slumbers. There are two levels of play: Basic and Standard plus some optional rules for added realism (realism?).

If Lonely Mountain is a pleasantly diverting parlour game, **Moria, the Dwarven City** is a quite different kettle of bananas. It's a hard core role-playing supplement of immense and impressive detail. From the atmospheric cover picture of the interior of the Dwarves' stony stronghold through 72 pages of descriptions, charts, illustrations and floor plans, to the colour map on the inside of the back cover, this is a fine looking supplement. There is a lot more about the City and mines of Khazad-dûm than Prof Tolkien ever told us but it's all excellent gaming material. The UK printing of ICE's **Middle Earth Role-playing Game** is now available from Games Workshop. It's boxed with what I feel is rather a fine looking box picture. It has been suggested that ICE themselves are not so pleased with it, feeling it to be 'too evil'. Cobblers!

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Using **THE WORDS OF GO-GUJI** with the AD&D® game

Bushido is markedly different from the **AD&D®** game. As well as combat/magic skills, emphasis is placed on non-adventuring skills, such as the game of **Go**, or heraldry. When using this scenario with the AD&D game, the DM should try to recreate the atmosphere of feudal Japan instead of attempting to translate Bushido game mechanics directly to AD&D terms.

To help in running the adventure, the glossary below provides English translations of Japanese words and terms. Where applicable, AD&D equivalents are given for weapons and spells. The DM may decide to use Japanese weapons or to convert them to AD&D weapons. For example, three different types of arrow appear in the adventure: armour piercing, bowel raker and humming bulb. Their statistics can be found in the glossary, but the DM could simplify them by treating armour piercing arrows as **arrows +1**, bowel rakers as normal arrows and humming bulbs as signalling arrows only.

Photo courtesy of Ciba-Geigy

SKILLS: Where possible Bushido skills have been translated into AD&D terms, but the social skills have been ignored. If you wish to make use of them in this scenario, this can be done by rolling 1d20 and if the result is less than or equal to the character's score then the character has successfully used the skill. For example, if Azo the geisha (Singing 9) sings and rolls a 9 or less, she has succeeded; however, if she rolls higher than 9, her singing will be off-key — the higher she rolls over 9, the worse it will be.

ARMOUR: Bushido allows characters to vary their armour class by adding extra pieces of armour. Partial heavy samurai armour consists of body armour and a helmet; by adding lower leg and arm protection it becomes heavy samurai armour; the addition of full limb and face protection turns it into a complete suit of armour. For simplicity all heavy samurai armour (whether partial or full) is treated as banded armour (AC4), and light armour as scale mail (AC6). To simulate the Bushi's ability to partially avoid an attack in combat, all Bushi characters have dexterity bonuses which increase their armour class by 1-4. If player characters strip vanquished foes of their armour they will simply gain banded or scale armour in an oriental style.

WEAPONS: Weapon quality varies according to the skill of the craftsman who forged the blade. A good quality weapon gives +1 to hit and to damage; in AD&D this could be considered a superior blade or as a **sword +1**. If superior blades are used it is recommended that any weapon with a bonus of +2 is considered to be magical.

OKUDEN: These are the secret teachings taught to warriors by masters of their profession. By employing okuden techniques Bushido warriors able to secure a clear advantage over their opponents. Where possible these have been converted to AD&D in the form of special attacks and defences.

TREASURE: Wealth in Bushido is on a less grand scale than in AD&D, therefore the 40 gold found in the castle should be converted to 5000gp.

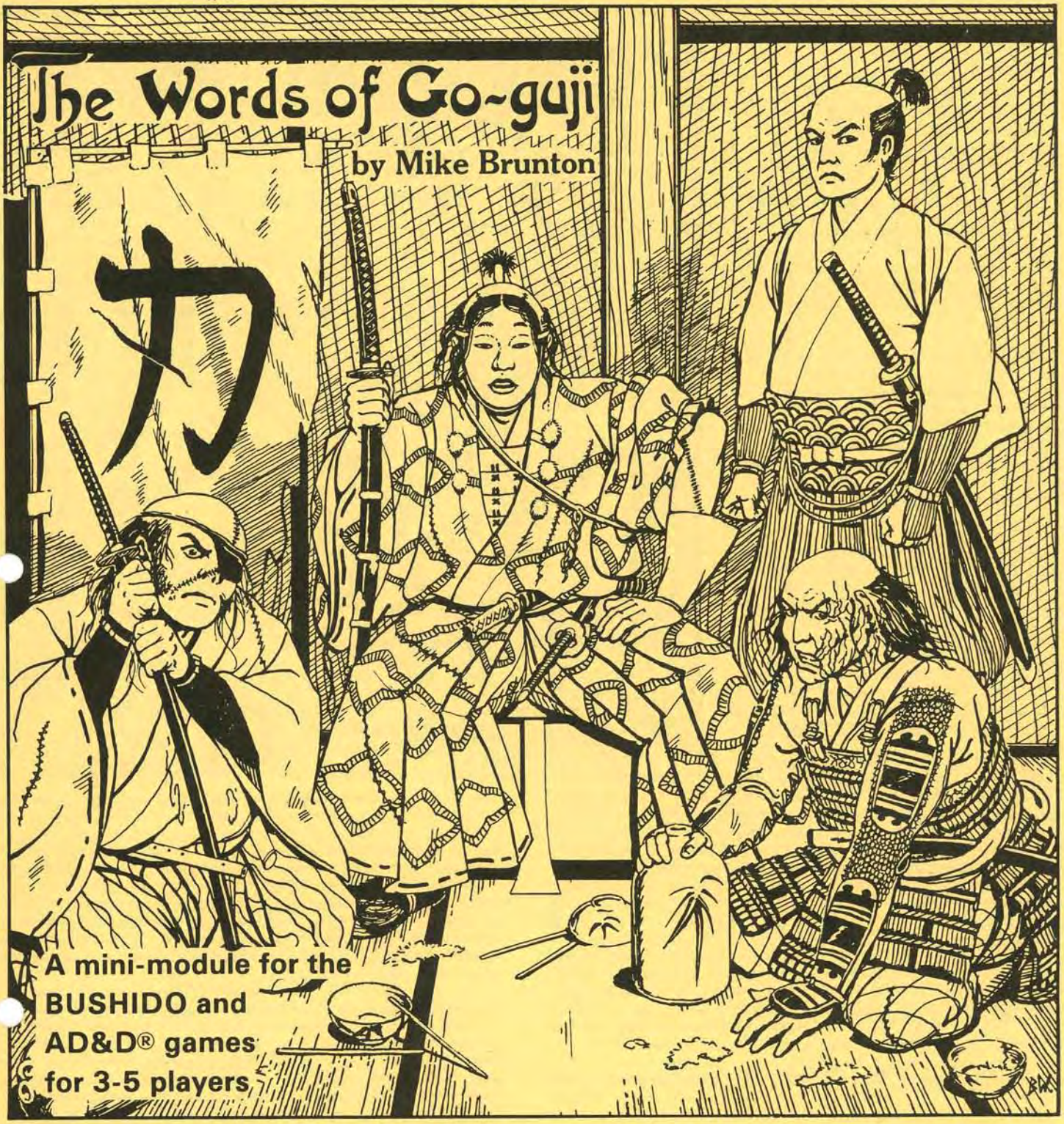
Now read through the Bushido adventure (referring to the glossary for unfamiliar terms) and then turn to page 33 for AD&D stats and information.

GLOSSARY

aiguchi — a small, easily concealable dagger; damage 1-3/1-3
arrows — armour piercing (+1 to hit but only 1-5 points of damage); bowel raker (-2 to hit but 1d6+1d3 points of damage); humming bulb (used primarily for signalling; -1 to hit and does only 1-3 points of damage)
ashigaru — peasant or low caste warriors
bajutsu — the technique of horsemanship
BCS — base chance of success; the number or less to be rolled on 1d20 to be successful in a given act; any adjustments to BCS can be converted directly into AD&D so that a BCS -4 when using a bow would become -4 to hit in AD&D
bonze — a wandering Buddhist priest
budoka — similar to the AD&D monk
buke — the military aristocracy
bushi — fighters, this term is not the same as samurai
dai-kyu — a long bow
dosojin — kami of roads and travellers
fue — a bamboo flute
geisha — courtesans
gakusho — a cleric; can be either Buddhist or Shintoist, and very rarely both
hirigana — an alphabet used for literary works
iaijutsu — the technique of fast-drawing a sword and attacking a foe in the same movement
jigai — formal suicide for women of the buke class
jigami — protective kami who protect a village, farm or area
kami — the gods, goddesses and spirits of Shinto; everything in creation has its own unique kami
kanji — an alphabet used for certain literary works
kanshi — seppuku (ritual suicide) to show disapproval of one's liege lord
katana — the classic samurai sword - treat as a bastard sword
kenjutsu — the technique of using swords
koto — a Japanese zither
kyu — a bow
kyujutsu — technique of using kyu (bows)
naginata — a glaive-like polearm - for AD&D treat as a halberd
naginatajutsu — technique of using naginata
ni-to-kenjutsu — technique of fighting with two weapons, specifically swords
nodachi — a great sword; treat as two-handed sword
okuden — secret and advanced weapon techniques
ronin — landless and occasionally masterless warriors, usually samurai; mercenaries
sake — rice wine
samisen — a banjo-like musical instrument
samurai — warrior retainers to a daimyo (head of a clan)
segaki rite — burial rite which prevents the dead person becoming an undead; in this module a remove curse cast on the body followed by bless spell and a proper burial will remove the curse
seppuku — ritual suicide; hari-kiri
shinten — the theology of Shinto
Shinto — the religion of Japan
shugenja — a magic user
shuriken — throwing stars, treat as darts but doing 1-4 points of damage
shurikenjutsu — the technique of using shuriken
sojutsu — the use of various types of spears
sumai — Japanese wrestling
tatami — floor mats
tengu (karasu) — nipponese monster which resembles a cross between a man and a crow
wakazashi — the second sword worn by samurai; treat as a short sword
walk the way of wood — a Bushido spell
wit saving throw — a saving throw vs Spells, wisdom bonuses apply
yadomejutsu — the technique of arrow cutting using a sword; similar to the monk's ability to dodge missiles
yari — a spear

The Words of Go-guji

by Mike Brunton



A mini-module for the BUSHIDO and AD&D® games for 3-5 players

This scenario is designed for a party of 3-5 Bushido adventurers. Because there is no real relationship between the skills and the level that a character can have, no precise guidance as to levels can be given. Characters should be 2nd or 3rd level with one or two good combat skills — but if characters of this level do not exist in the campaign there is the possibility of gaining allies during the adventure. At least one of the characters should be of a profession other than Bushi or Budoka.

If you intend running a character in this adventure, you should read no further. The rest of the information is for the referee alone.

Introduction

This adventure can be set in any mountainous and relatively inaccessible area of Nippon. Although nominally located in Mutsu Province, the village of Shinen, Kumo Castle and the surrounding valley can be placed in any location that the referee finds convenient for his or her campaign.

The Bushido Non-Player Characters given in the text already have level adjustments made to their BCS scores and the like.

When using the adventure for **AD&D®** characters, statistics given on pages 24 and 33 should be substituted for the Bushido statistics. The characters should be 3rd to 5th level. Unless noted otherwise in that section the general flow of the adventure will be unaltered.

A Note on Pronunciation

Unlike English, there are no silent vowels in Japanese — or at least there are none in the version which is spoken in the fantasy world of Nippon. As with Italian, ending vowels are sounded. Kumo Ushii is pronounced *KOO-MOH OO-SHE-EE*, sake as *SAH-KEH* etc, with all the syllables given an equal stress.

A glossary of Japanese words is included in the statistics for the AD&D game.

Background

The village of Shinen, located in a mountain valley south of Hirosaki in Mutsu Province, has never been worthy of attention since the end of silver mining in the surrounding hills. The Kumo 'clan' have held the lands around Shinen for generations, content to live on the proceeds of the mines and the labours of the peasantry. Kumo Castle, the fortified mansion that controls the valley, is little more than a large manor house, although it has a strong defensive position. Remote and now unimportant, Shinen has sunk into almost total obscurity.

Three years ago, in the middle of the worst winter that Shinen had seen, a bonze — a travelling Buddhist monk — arrived in the valley by mountain paths. Nearly dead from exposure, he was taken in and nursed by the village headman and his family. When the bonze had recovered, he cured the headman's grandmother of her blindness in payment for the kindness shown to him.

The bonze presented himself to Kumo Ushii, master of Kumo Castle and Shinen village, and the last of his family. The bonze humbly asked for permission to remain in the village, teaching and healing the villagers of their ailments — at least until the worst of the winter had passed. Kumo Ushii could find no cause to refuse the monk this request, although personally he preferred the Shinto faith. He gave his consent, and asked the bonze for his name. 'Go-guji' replied the Buddhist monk truthfully, as that was the name his father had given him.

At this Kumo Ushii flew into a great rage, for a go-guji is a priest at a Shinto shrine. Kumo Ushii was convinced that the bonze was deliberately insulting him and his religion — and in front of his samurai retainers. Again he asked the man for his name, and again the bonze replied 'Go-guji'. Kumo Ushii was now beside himself with anger, and signalled two of his samurai to hold the bonze. Before they could touch the monk he had knocked them senseless with his staff. Then Go-guji turned to Kumo Ushii and said 'It is against my faith to kill, so you shall not be killed. You shall not be killed!'

As the last word fell from his lips, Go-guji was dead. Tadaka Kuwe, Kumo's chief retainer, had struck off the bonze's head from behind with an single stroke of his katana. Kumo Ushii pushed the body with his foot, and ordered it to be hung from a gibbet as a warning to all those who dared to be disrespectful. The body hung for two weeks and was then thrown into a rubbish pit.

Kumo Ushii forgot the bonze. With the coming of spring he and his men resumed their life of fighting and hunting. The peasants did not forget the bonze, and gave little offerings to the kami on his behalf before returning to the fields.

But with the first month of summer, the bonze's words came back to the thoughts of Kumo Ushii. He and five of his retainers were attacked by a group of ronin — wandering, masterless samurai. All but one of the attackers were swiftly cut down, but the leader gave more of a fight, and severely wounded Kumo Ushii, toppling him from his horse. The retainers gathered round their master, who had been slashed across the chest. Amazed that he was not dead when they saw the rent in his armour, they were horrified when Ushii Kumo sat up, his ribs and collar bone clearly visible within the wound.

In tremendous agony, and holding his wound closed, Kumo Ushii climbed into his saddle and rode for home. His chest and neck had been deeply cut by the ronin's blade, but he did not bleed — there was only pain in the wound, not blood.

The wound was sewn up, but it refused to heal and the pain became a dull, constant ache. The stitches rotted and fell out, and the wound opened again, yet still it did not bleed. A second set of stitches rotted and again the wound opened. Others were wounded, and suffered in the same way. Kumo Ushii and his retainers were ensorcelled, cursed with the dying words of the bonze. There was sake to numb the pain, and gold thread to hold wounds closed, but there was no healing for those who had heard Go-guji's words — Kumo Ushii and his samurai.

The samurai abandoned honour as 'weakness' when they realised that although they could be injured and wounded, they could not die in battle. Kumo Ushii remembered the bonze's last words, and decided that their 'invulnerability' was the reward for dealing with the man's insolence in a proper fashion. He began to think of himself as an immortal, free to do what he wished. He and his men put aside their honour as bushi and took to a life of banditry and bloodshed, killing travellers on the roads and taking what they wanted.

For more than two years they have lived in this fashion, terrorising villagers of Shinen into silence with their deathless power and ambushing travellers without mercy. Only a few have been spared — a physician, Gono, two geisha, Azo and Daki, and a young woman of the Buke class, Tsumo Ishisu. She was knocked unconcious before she could commit jigai — seppuku for women. Although carefully watched and guarded, she is more than she appears, and is making plans to obtain help...

Tsumo Ishisu is a shugenja — a sorceress — and to a limited degree a seeress as well. She has been using the spell **Walk the Way of Wood** in an attempt to find help, although so far without any real success. Those she has approached in this way have all been superstitious peasants, who have fled in terror at the sight of her 'noble ghost' — or been too stupified with awe to take notice of what she was trying to tell them. One of her attempts is at the Shrine in the Mist (Encounter 1 — see below), which will offer the party the first clues as to the true nature of the adventure they should undertake.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure should start in Hirosaki or a nearby village on the south bound road to Akita. Merchants regularly pass through, as do other travellers — pilgrims, soldiers and officials. During the time the player characters are in Hirosaki or the village they should hear travellers' rumours of bandits in the mountains, unkillable warriors who attack merchant caravans, and strange mists that swallow men. However, the referee should make it clear that even those telling such stories do not give them much credence.

The player characters should be persuaded to travel south to Akita, perhaps on their own, or as the escort to some merchant or pilgrim. The exact motive for this journey is up to the referee, depending upon the details of the campaign and the aims of the player characters involved.

Encounters on the Road

The referee should not use the standard encounter tables for this adventure, and should use only the standard encounters given below. The true nature and location of the adventure will only become evident after this sequence of encounters. Detailed maps are not provided for these encounters; they are straightforward enough not to require them.

1. The Shrine in the Mist

After the party have been travelling for some time, possibly over the course of several days, the road starts climbing into the mountains. A thin mist starts to gather beneath the trees on each side of the south bound road, becoming thicker as time passes and the road makes it way up towards a low mountain pass.

By early morning the party have reached a small, apparently deserted Shinto shrine, wreathed in mist. Dedicated to Dosojin, the kami of roads and travellers, it is plain and unadorned. There is nothing of value within the shrine, except a small stone statue of the kami, and some offerings of dried fruit and rice.

Just beyond the shrine the road turns to the west, prior to dropping down into the valley beyond. Another, rougher road forks away from the main way, leading southwards and higher up into the mountains.

As the party reach this point, the mist will grow thicker — as if aided by some supernatural agency — and a damp chill will settle over the shrine and the surrounding area. Any armour and clothing will become wet with condensation, and bowstrings which are unprotected will become damp almost to the point of uselessness (BCS -4 when using an affected bow).

The referee should read the following to the players:

> Out of the mist walks a young woman clad in a simple kimono, of such a colour that it is difficult to tell where it ends and the mist begins. She barely seems to touch the ground as she walks, and the plants she brushes against are not disturbed by her passage. The woman bows slightly to the shrine, then turns towards you and speaks:
>
> 'Greetings. I have waited for such as you. Honour and death await you on your road, the road to my prison. Honour and death must be restored to their proper places — you are the ones I have chosen.
>
> 'Three will you meet, three will you fight, three will you defeat, on the south road.
>
> 'Go not to Akita.'
>
> The young woman points along the narrower road that leads up into the mountains. Before she can say more, a tremendous wind seems to tear at her hair and her clothing, although you feel nothing in the damp mist. With a final, almost despairing, cry the woman's form seems to blow apart and dissolve into the mist, as though she had never been.

The 'ghost' is Tsumo Ishisu (see below for full statistics), who is at present being held prisoner in Kumo Castle. She has been interrupted during the casting of her **Walk the Way of Wood**, by her body being directly threatened with death. As a result of returning to her body she has taken 13 points of subdual damage.

Any Gakusho and Shugenja should be allowed to make a Wit Saving Throw to realise that the young woman was not a ghost, but a Shugenja casting a **Walk the Way** spell of some type. The player characters should be encouraged to take Tsumo's appearance and speech as a prophecy — one which predestines them to do her bidding.

Any Non-Player Characters (pilgrims, merchants or the like) who are accompanying the party will opt to return to Hirosaki after this unnerving — to them — encounter with the supernatural. The player characters will be released from any obligations that they owe to these NPCs at this point, freeing them from prior constraints of duty.

2. The Tengu

This encounter takes place at the point marked **1** on Map 1: Shinen Village and Kumo Castle. The player characters enter the valley along the road on the north edge of that map.

The road climbs slowly into the mountains, along the side of a narrow river valley. Towards mid-morning the mist will clear and the countryside will open up into a pleasant river valley, sheltered by the surrounding high peaks. The road winds its way along the side of a wooded valley bottom. After describing this peaceful scene to the players the referee should read out the following:

> Ahead the woods come to an end, and the bottom of the river valley is given over to small paddy fields. In the distance a large manor house stands on a mound in the middle of a serene and beautiful lake. Before you can take in more of this scene there is cackling laughter over your head, and stones start dropping all around you.
>
> A curious creature, half crow half man, drops onto a large rock near the road and hops backwards, forwards and from side to side in some excitement. As it speaks in a hoarse, cawing voice, its hopping grows even more manic.
>
> 'HA! Fight! Fight! Fight me, brave warriors! Fight me, wily swordsmen! Need challenges I do! HA! Need to battle true men, I do! Fight! Fight! Fight! Need to test my sword, I do! Duel, we will! Fight one of you, I will, but Kakati is better! Always Tengu is better! HA!'

Despite his brave words, Kakati the Tengu will hop up and down on his rock, cawing 'Fight, fight, fight!' every once in a while, rather than actually initiate combat. He will assume, however, that any action such as readying or drawing a weapon as an invitation to begin, and will leap from his rock onto the road in preparation for combat, drawing his katana as he does so. If any missile weapons are fired at him Kakati will attempt to use his yadomejutsu skill to parry them, then he will attack, cawing 'No honour! HA! Worthy of my sword you are not!' as he does so. Kakati will attempt to peck the character(s) who fired at him, and then escape into the trees.

If the party choose to ignore him, Kakati will follow them, generally making a complete nuisance of himself by attempting to steal any bright, shiny objects that are visible on the player characters. He will also make sufficient noise and disturbance to make quiet movement or concealment impossible.

If any member of the party does choose to fight him, Kakati will be overjoyed and very respectful to that character. He will hop down onto the road and wait politely, but with some impatience, for the character to ready himself.

Kakati is a Karasu Tengu, and a skilful and courageous opponent:
BAP 12 (24); MNA 2; ZAN 2; BMA 4 (7); AC 5 (7); HPT 25; BUDO 3; Dam +1d6; bracketed statistics apply to the Tengu when he is flying.
SKILLS: Kenjutsu (21) with Reverse Cut (18) and Disarm (20) Okuden, Yadomejutsu (18), Sumai (BCS 11, Dam 2d6) when on the ground.
WEAPONS: Master quality Katana (BCS +3, Dam +3) — Kakati's Kenjutsu and Okuden BCSs take this weapon into account; Beak (BCS 12, Dam 1d3).

In the fight Kakati will attempt to disarm his opponent(s) rather than wound them. His skill with the Reverse Cut Okuden means that he has little fear of being surrounded, and when he successfully uses this skill he will make a point of cawing loudly about his success. Initially (until he is wounded) Kakati will not fight to kill, but merely for the fun of exercising his swordsmanship. The referee should ignore any critical successes, and reduce any damage caused by two steps, but should tell the players that the Tengu is obviously 'pulling his punches'. Once wounded Kakati will fight in earnest, but take the earliest opportunity to flee back to his rock.

Once Kakati has drawn blood he will hop back onto his rock looking very pleased with himself. If he is not attacked at this point he will compliment those involved in the fight on their skill in his strange cawing way, 'Good you are! Worthy of Kakati! Better than the dead ones!' If he is attacked he will fly off into the trees and will not be encountered again.

Kakati will be quite willing to talk after the fight, given the opportunity. He knows little of the doings of the Shinen villagers, as he avoids

MAP 1: Shinen Village & Kumo Castle

peasants as unworthy creatures. He does, however, know that all is not right at Kumo castle, and will relate the following about the samurai from the castle:

'Fight! HA! Fought, we did! Wounded them, I did! HA! Cheated, they did! Bleed and die, they did not! Cut them hard, Kakati did! Saw their bones, I did! Always Tengu is better! HA! But not against dead men who don't die...'

Kakati will offer no further explanation, and will become relatively subdued after this speech.

If the referee feels it necessary for the party's chances of success in this adventure, Kakati can be used as an ally to the players. After the duel he will offer his friendship — Kakati is mischievous rather than wicked — and if this is accepted he will hop round the character who offered to fight him, cawing delightedly. The referee should play Kakati as a rather impetuous, impatient individual who enjoys nothing better than the chance to show off in combat. He will be quite happy to fall in with whatever plans are made by the party.

3. 'Three will you meet...'

This encounter will occur at the group of houses marked **2**. The road will be empty, although it will be obvious to even the most casual observer that people are watching from behind their doors and window screens.

After the encounter with Kakati the Tengu the adventurers should be persuaded to continue on to Shinen Village, whether the Tengu is with them or not. Oddly, there is no-one at work in the fields or moving about near the houses. Smoke from a cooking fire is rising from the castle.

Before the adventurers have gone more than a quarter of a mile — and well before they go round the bend that allows them to see the bulk of the village — they will be overtaken by three mounted and armoured samurai, with tattered and war-stained banners fluttering behind them. The samurai are leading four sweating pack animals, heavily laden with boxes and bundles of merchant's goods.

The samurai will canter along the road, oblivious to those in their way — except the player characters. Regardless of where they see the PCs, the samurai will pull up, wheel, and attack, unless the PCs are striving to appear like frightened villagers themselves. Anything that differs from the normal atmosphere of terror will attract the attention of the samurai.

The samurai are Saitoh, Gozo and Hirato Hodaka (see Non-Player Characters for full details). The brothers are three of Kumo Ushii's retainers, returning from a raid with their spoils.

Saitoh and Gozo are 2nd level Bushi (HPT 33/31, 32/5 — see below for an explanation of the two HPT statistics), armed with a No-dachi, Katana and Wakazahi each. Hirato is a 1st level Bushi (HPT 26/0) armed only with a Yari and a No-dachi. All are wearing AC 6 Complete Light Samurai Armour.

The Hodaka brothers will press home their attack with grim determination, at least until one of them is wounded. At this point they will attempt to withdraw and, if successful, they will gallop down the causeway and into Kumo castle (marked **4**), dragging the pack animals with them. Should this be impossible, they will fight on, only so that they may resort to 'playing dead' once they have been wounded. Once they are 'dead' they will crawl back to the castle through the paddy fields, as soon as they are ignored by the party as just dead bodies.

The pack horses bundles are made up entirely of bottles of sake and plum brandy.

SHINEN VALLEY AND KUMO CASTLE

Shinen Village

The main part of Shinen village (marked **3**) is made up of simple peasant houses and storehouses. The village is clean, tidy and well kept but, for the most part, curiously 'unlived in', as though the inhabitants do not want to draw attention to themselves.

Such is indeed the case. The villagers, under their headman, Tanabe, realise that the Lord of the valley, Kumo Ushii, is not the just man he once was. Rather than offer any cause for anger to the uncanny Kumo and his retainers, the villagers have opted to take as little interest as possible in what happens beyond their walls. Except when working in the fields or hunting on the steep slopes around Shinen, the villagers stay hidden, watching from behind their windows, but never showing themselves unless they have no choice.

MAP 2: Kumo Castle

The only exceptions to this are Tanabe, who still goes about his business as headman and deals with Kumo Ushii on those rare occasions when the village's doings must concern the samurai, and Suto, who is regarded as the village idiot. Suto is far from stupid, however, and has always idolised the samurai — even more so now that they seem to him to be invulnerable. He now acts as Kumo Ushii's eyes and ears in the village, reporting back to him on all matters pertaining to the Kumo's interests in the village.

If the adventurers discuss their plans in the hearing of the villagers and Suto is there — or he is listening (90% chance, unless precautions have been taken) — Kumo Ushii will be informed of the player character's intentions towards him.

The villagers will, once they are assured that the player characters mean them no harm, be friendly but a little withdrawn. They will be quite willing to relate what has happened, although they do not know why Go-guji was killed, or what happened to his body. Tanabe has seen Tsumo Ishisu, and will recognise the description of the 'ghost' as her if he is told it.

There are 90 villagers in total. All are Average Extras (HPT 1 each), with few, if any, combat skills. Given the choice, they will take no part in any violence against Kumo Ushii and his men.

The other buildings in the valley are the abandoned mine workings (5), a small shrine to the Kami of the Lake on the island (6) and a traveller's shrine (7), dedicated to the Jigami (protective kami spirit) of the village.

Kumo Castle

The location of Kumo Castle (marked **4** on Map 1, see Map 2 for more detail) at the end of a long causeway across paddy fields and a lake is the castle's main defence, although it is closer to a large house with a fortified outer wall.

Within the outer walls the buildings are in a poor state of repair. As the samurai have become slipshod and ragged in their own appearance, so the castle has suffered from neglect. Far from being the clean and tidy place it once was, it is in very poor condition. Door and screens are torn and filthy, rubbish — mostly bottles — lies in the courtyards, and flies hover everywhere. The whole place has an unhealthy smell, something between a sickroom and a charnel house.

In the stables are eight warhorses and two pack animals. Once fine animals, they are unkempt and underfed, and the stable has not been cleaned in several days.

Within the main building the rooms are untidy and dirty. Most have one or two pieces of loot — rich silks, clothes, weaponry, coins, artworks etc (total value about 40 gold) — scattered across the floor, liberally mixed with food and drink that has been trampled into the tatami floor mats.

Kumo Ushii still occupies his old room, but the samurai have moved into the main hall of the house. Kanchira Yukika and Kakamei Kono, the Ashigaru, still occupy the smaller of the barracks. Azo and Daki have been given freedom to come and go as they please, but they spend most of their time in their room. Tsumo Ishisu is confined in front of the house and one of the samurai (referee's discretion) is with her at all times. Gono the physician is kept in his cell, a poorly built place that he was forced to make for himself.

Go-guji's body is still in the rubbish pit where it was thrown in the first place, although this is now hidden beneath a pile of empty sake flasks and barrels.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Kumo Ushii and his Samurai

Kumo Ushii and his samurai retainers are unable to die, which is not quite what they believe themselves to be: unkillable and invulnerable. Although they cannot be killed, the wounds they receive do not heal at all, nor do their bodies recover from the normal wear and tear of everyday life. While they are not dying, they are certainly not living — they are merely existing, buoyed up by the artificial good humour of rice wine, plum brandy and the drugs that the physician, Gono, administers to them.

Their affliction can be traced back to Go-guji the bonze, who was not a wicked man, but a victim of the perversity of the supernatural. His spirit is tied to his body, and while it remains in this world Kumo Ushii and his samurai will not know death themselves, no matter how injured or ill they may become. Should the body of Go-guji be treated with proper respect and be given a decent funeral — the Segaki Rite — his spirit will be freed. The samurai will have their mortality restored to them — they will be as normal men once again. However, they will also suffer the full effects of any wounds they have suffered during between the bonze's death and the present, so it is more than likely that most — if not all —the samurai will succumb to their wounds and die once the bonze's body is cremated.

If none of the player characters is a Buddhist Gakusho capable of performing the Segaki Rite on the body of Go-guji, thus releasing his soul and allowing Kumo Ushii and his men to return to normal, the referee may use Tanabe, the village headman a Rabble Buddhist Gakusho (HPT 5). The player characters would then have to recover Go-guji's body and take it to Tanabe for a proper funeral.

Two ratings are given for the Hit Points of Kumo Ushii and his retainers. In each case, the first of these numbers is the standard HPT of the NPC concerned. However, rather than dying once this total is exceeded, the Samurai will become too damaged to function aggressively, although they will still be alive. They will be capable of little more than dragging themselves away from a fight. This applies to all lethal damage — including magically-caused damage and damage due to fire — that they suffer (if one is killed outright, he is assumed to take damage equal to his HPT). Subdual damage has no effect whatsoever.

The second number is the amount of damage the NPC has taken in the time between Go-guji's death and the present. This number is used to calculate how difficult it is to repair a particular NPC (see below). Once Go-guji's body is given a proper funeral this damage — and any the NPCs have suffered at the hands of the player characters during the course of this adventure — is imposed in full. This could well lead to the NPC dropping dead immediately; Kumo Ushii will certainly do so.

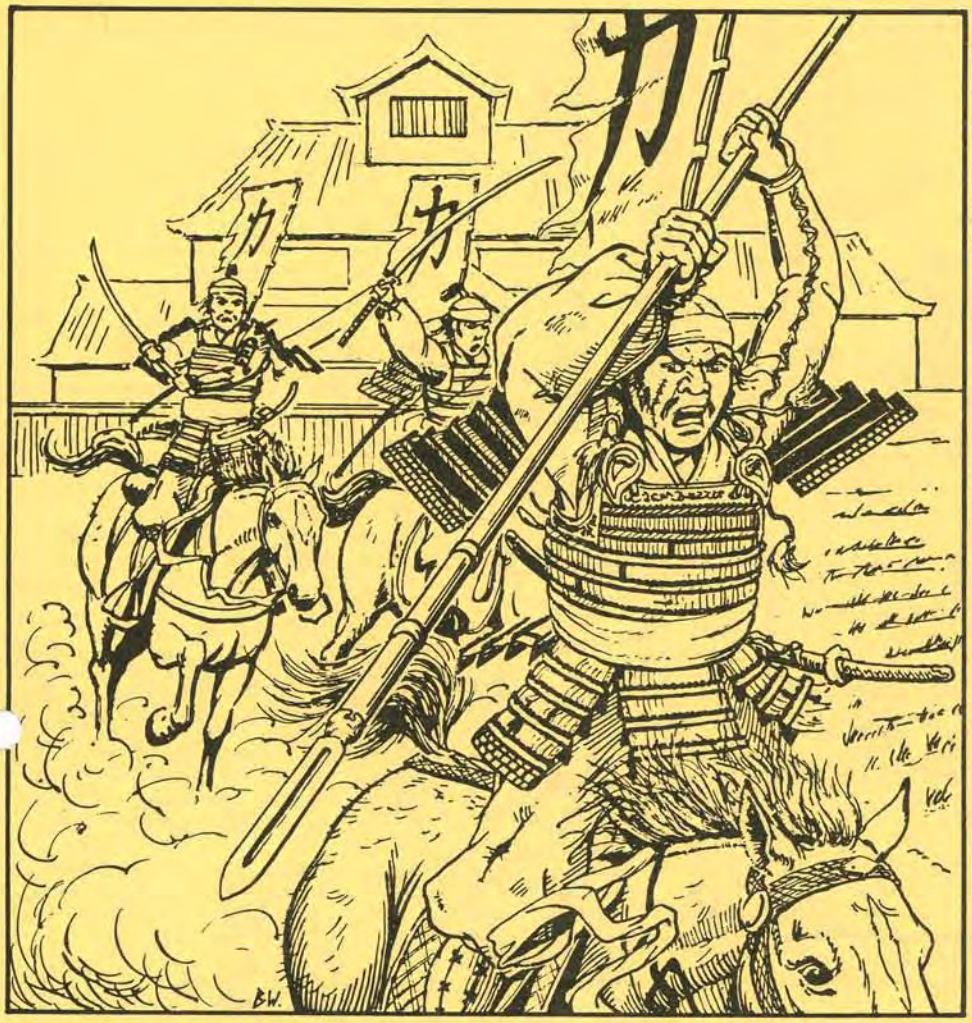
Once Kumo Ushii and his samurai are damaged, they will not heal, but may be repaired by anyone with Physician skill. This includes such actions as stitching wounds closed, straightening and splinting broken bones, and pinning severed body parts back into place. This is a Task, with a Task Value of (total points of damage suffered/5) and a Task turn of 1 hour. For example, the Task Value of repairing Kumo Ushii after a fight in which he takes 23 points of damage is (23+67)/5 = 18.

Due to the unnatural condition of Kumo Ushii and his samurai, any character who battles against them should make a Will Saving Throw. Failure means the character involved suffers a -2 BCS penalty, due to the apparent ineffectiveness of his attacks. Furthermore, should a character fight one of the samurai that has already been defeated and repaired another Will Saving Throw is necessary or a further -2 BCS penalty will be incurred because of the unnerving quality of having to 'kill' the same man twice.

Kumo Ushii, Master of Kumo Castle (4th level Bushi)
STR 35; DFT 10; SPD 10; HLH 20; WT 15; WL 30; DAM +4; BAP 5; MN 1; BMA 3; ZAN 2; HPT 50/67; Brawl 8; Climb 5; Leap 5; Swim 5.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (16), Kenjutsu (15), Kyujutsu (13), Naginatajutsu (12), Sojutsu (14), Hawking (19), Heraldry (5), Go (17), Poetry (8).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Good (but rather ill-kept) Samurai Garb over AC4 Partial Ninja Armour; Up to AC5 Partial Heavy Samurai Armour and a suit of AC 9 Superior Heavy Samurai Armour available.
WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Good Katana and Wakizashi (BCS +1, Dam +1); Average No-dachi, yari, naginata and MR 4 Dai-kyu, with 24 armour piercer arrows also available.

Kumo Ushii, the last of the Kumo clan, presents a strange and disturbing image to the world and one hardly fitting to his station. Beneath the Noh actor's mask he has taken to wearing, his face is seamed with three unhealed cuts, stitched closed by thin gold thread. A hawking glove hides the fact that two of his fingers were nearly severed, and are now similarly stitched back with gold wire. His untidy and rather dirty clothes hang loosely, hiding the ninja mail coat he wears — 'gods' do not need such mundane protection. As the result of a fall from his horse that damaged his right knee, Kumo Ushii limps and finds it difficult to kneel down. His voice is hoarse and his breath wheezes through his original chest wound.

He is bad tempered, impolite, imperious and rarely sober. Although he doesn't even admit it to himself, he knows that his condition is a curse, rather than the blessing that he proclaims it to be. The strain of lying to himself and everyone else about it and the fact that he and his men are now mere bandits makes him aggressive to the point of foolishness. Kumo Ushii never had any real interest in the finer arts of being a Buke, but thanks to the pain of his wounds he has become mean spirited and cruel.



Kumo Ushii is not unintelligent, but he has been backed into a corner by his own sense of shame at becoming an undying thug — despite the pain he loves life and what remains of his 'honour'. Even the restoration of his honour through Seppuku is denied to him and his life is a particularly hard burden to bear without that solace.

Even if the situation — and the need for Go-guji's funeral — is explained to him, he will actively prevent the player characters from recovering the body, as this would, in his opinion, besmirch his remaining honour by respecting one who was 'impolite' to him in the first place.

Tadaka Kuwe, Kumo's chief retainer (3rd level Bushi)
STR 25; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 23; WT 3; WL 15; DAM +2; BAP 10; MNA 1; BMA 5; ZAN 2; HPT 37/14; Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 7; Swim 7.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (15), Kenjutsu (16), Ni-To-Kenjutsu (15), Sumai (13), Go (3), Hawking (13), Musical Instrument — Fue (15), Painting (10).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb; up to AC 6 Complete Light Samurai Armour available, but normally wears only AC 4 when expecting trouble.
WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Average Katana and Wakizashi; Inferior Katana — his practice weapon — (BCS -1, Dam -1) and MR 2 Dai-kyu (Tadaka suffers -2 BCS when using this weapon due to the wrong Man Rating) with 12 bowel raker arrows and 6 humming bulb arrows available.

Tadaka Kuwe is directly responsible for the current state of affairs. It was his sword that ended Go-guji's life, and the rest of the samurai have held him at a distance ever since.

Although he knows that something is wrong, Tadake doesn't quite know what — or why he is a social outcast. He only knows that he no longer has as many friends as he once did and this, combined with the pain of a face wound that he has suffered, has made him silent, sullen and withdrawn. He has taken to spending much of his time in the garden, come rain or shine, playing his flute and, although he is a good player, he only knows five melodies. In turn his fellow samurai have left him alone to an even greater degree, and prayed that he would learn at least one new tune.

As a result of his face wound Tadaka is blind in his left eye, and the end of his nose is missing. Consequently he suffers all the penalties of partial blindness, and any opponents gain the appropriate bonuses.

Ich'yama, (5th level Bushi)
STR 20; DFT 15; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 20; WL 25; DAM +1; BAP 7; MNA 1; BMA 5; ZAN 2; HPT 32/22; Brawl 6; Climb 7; Leap 7; Swim 6.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (8), Iaijutsu (21) with Lightning Stroke (8) Okuden, Kenjutsu (19) with Precision Strike (9) Okuden, Shurikenjutsu (13), Yadomejutsu (16), Hirigana (16), Court Dance (19), Physician (7), Poetry (16), Shinten (14), Tea Ceremony (19).
ARMOUR: Normally wears AC3 Partial Light Samurai Armour; AC1 Good Samurai Garb over AC 4 Partial Ninja Armour worn on 'social' occasions; up to AC 7 Heavy Samurai Armour available, but rarely worn as Ich'yama feels that it interferes with his style of combat.
WEAPONS: Always carries Good Katana (BCS +1, Dam +1), Average Wakizashi and 3 Shuriken. No other weapons available.

Visibly unmarked by his experiences in the last two years, Ich'yama — 'Number One Mountain' — is an expert warrior, a Master of the Tea Ceremony, a theologist and poet — a cultured man, in fact. Ich'yama secretly disapproves of everything that has happened at Kumo Castle, and has even gone as far as committing Kanshi — Seppuku to reprove one's Lord — in an attempt to make Kumo Ushii change his bandit ways. Naturally, his suicide attempt failed, and left him with a massive stomach wound.

In the year since then, Ich'yama has become the most brutal, cruel and unfeeling of the samurai. Denied his right to an honourable death, and feeling polluted by his 'failure', Ich'yama has drowned his guilt in a river of other people's blood. He chooses to exist only for battle, and regularly takes a part in bandit raids, slaughtering all those who cross his path. He has never taken any goods or treasure while on one these expeditions, thus salving his conscience with an illusion that he is still a true warrior and loyal retainer, rather than a mere bandit.

Shintaro Fumito, Tadake Ryochi, Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka, and **Noboyasu Emura** (2nd Level Bushi)
STR 20; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 5; WL 10; DAM +1; BAP 10; MNA 2; BMA 5; ZAN 1; HPT Shintaro Fumito (43/20), Tadake Ryochi* (40/102), Saitoh (33/31) and Gozo Hodaka (32/5), Noboyasu Emura (30/1); Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 8; Swim 9.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (13), Kenjutsu (12), Kyujutsu (11), Sojutsu (12), Hawking (10), Go (10).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb, Up to AC 8 Complete Heavy Samurai Armour available to each.
WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi each; three Yari and two Dai-kyu (MR 2) with 24 armour piercer arrows each available to this group; Shintaro and the Hodaka brothers also have an Average No-dachi each.

Kaji Yamabushi, Yamato Maki, Mito Ishiyama, Hirato Hodaka and **Mukade Shimokashi** (1st level Bushi)
STR 20; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 5; WL 10; DAM +1; BAP 10; MNA 2; BMA 5; ZAN 1; HPT Kaji Yamabushi* (35/80), Yamato Maki* (30/95), Mito Ishiyama (29/7), Hirato Hodaka (26/0) and Mukade Shimokashi (26/0); Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 8; Swim 8.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (12), Kenjutsu (11), Kyujutsu (11), Sojutsu (10), Hawking (10), Go (10); Kaji Yamabushi only: Naginatajutsu (12).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb, Up to AC 8 Complete Heavy Samurai Armour available to each.
WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi and Yari each; one Dai-kyu (MR 2) with 30 armour piercer arrows available; Hirato Hodaka has an Average No-dachi available; Kaji always carries (or has to hand) a Good (BCS +1, Dam +1) Naginata.

Kanchira Yukika* (HPT 10/88), and **Kakamei Kono** (HPT 7/4) are Rabble 1st level Bushi, the only Ashigaru (lesser Samurai) in the service of Kumo Ushii.
SKILLS: Kenjutsu (12); Sojutsu (14); Singing (3).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb; Up to AC 6 Heavy Ashigaru Armour available to each.
WEAPONS: Average Yari and Wakizashi each; Kakamei Kono habitually hides an Aiguchi in his left sleeve.

The minor retainers are an unwholesome group, who spend most of their time when not engaged in acts of banditry, drinking the proceeds of such raids. Rude to anyone who is not as they are, and polite to each other only because of the apparent necessity of spending eternity together, they are all belligerent and uncaring. They are, quite shamefully for samurai, grubby, unkempt and smelly.

* Tadake Ryochi, Kaji Yamabushi, Yamato Maki and Kanchira Yukika were badly burnt when they accidentally started a fire during one of their raids, hence the inflated second HPT figure. Of all Kumo Ushii's retainers, they are the most frightening and unnatural — they look little better than walking corpses. Gono has given them salves for their burns, but these have done little save ease the pain. Ako and Daki, the Geisha, have tried covering the burns with some of their make-up. It has been only partially successful.

Kumo Ushii's Prisoners

Azo and Daki
SKILLS: Massage (9), Singing (9), Musical Instruments — Koto (6), Samisen (5).

Azo and Daki were captured six months ago when Kumo Ushii and his men fell upon a military supply column by mistake. They were rapidly beaten off, their only prizes being these two women. Both are Rabble Geisha (HPT 3 each) somewhat past their prime and somewhat incompetent at their jobs.

Since then Azo and Daki have lost the taste they had for the 'romantic life' with bandits. They have had a thoroughly miserable time of things, being relegated to drudgery and fetching new bottles of sake, as the Samurai have shown little interest in them as women. They would have run away long ago, but for the fact that they have nowhere else to go.

Gono the Physician
SKILLS: Physician (15), Herbalist (13), Massage (12).

Gono is an Average Man (HPT 10), and a physician of some skill. Captured during an early raid, when Ich'yama realised that his medical skills were inadequate, Gono has been held prisoner, bound in chains, in a makeshift cell for the last year. He is only allowed out to 'cure' — repair is more accurate — as much of the damage the samurai have suffered as he can. Gono is a compassionate man, and feels deeply sorry for Kumo Ushii and his men, but he knows they would kill him on the spot if he ever said as much.

Gono is waiting for a clear opportunity to escape, and will help the player characters as much as he can, for instance by telling them the history of Kumo Ushii and his strange affliction. Gono also knows where Go-guji's body is — still in the rubbish pit — and he will show anyone its location.

Tsumo Ishisu (1st level Shugenja)
STR 5; DFT 10; SPD 10; HLH 10; WT 20; WL 25; DAM -1; BAP 5; MNA 1; BMA 3; ZAN 1; HPT 12; Brawl 4; Climb 5; Leap 5; Swim 4; Magic 10; Power 30.
SKILLS: Naginatajutsu (10), Calligraphry (14), Court Dance (17), Hiragana (17), Katagana (16), Kanji (16), Japanese Classics (14), Meditation (9), Tea Ceremony (13), Poetry (13).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Superior Samurai Garb; AC 1 Peasant Garb and AC 2 Good Samurai Court Garb available.
WEAPONS: None carried.
She had **Asagiri** (lit. 'Morning Mist'), a magical No-dachi, in her possession when she was captured. Asagiri is better than a Master quality weapon (BCS +4, Dam +3) which allo its user to cast the spells **Bar Missiles** (Schoo of Metal — 5 charges), **Mirror of Deception** (School of Water — 4 charges) and **Mists of Illusion** (School of Water — as 1st level spell, 7 charges).
This weapon has been confiscated by Kumo Ushii, but he will not use it through ignorance of the weapon's real power and fear of the consequences of unauthorised use.
SPELLS: School of Water (17): Quench; School of Wood (85): Arrow Force; Shadow Eyes; Walk the Way of Wood; School of Soil (21): Pure Blood; Pure Flesh; Traitor Ground.

Tsumo Ishisu has led a sheltered life, protected from the harshness of the real world. Despite this, she is a well-educated and cultured member of the Buke caste, and adept at the magic that she has so far been taught. Her capabilities are unrealised, rather than limited.

Kumo Ushii and his men assume that Tsumo must be guarded to prevent her from killing herself, Tsumo will not, in fact, commit jigai — she is under an oath that prevents her from taking her life just yet. The exact nature of this oath is not important to this adventure, and Tsumo has not discussed the matter with anybody, nor will she.

Apart from kidnapping her, the samurai have done nothing which is a threat to her honour, although they do not treat her kindly. She is largely left alone, and spends most of her time meditating — a useful cover for when she casts her **Walk the Way of Wood** spell.

Tsumo Ishisu is rather immature, and will romantically attach herself to one of her rescuers — the Bushi of the highest level, although she will prefer a member of the Buke caste. It is up to the referee to determine whether marriage is the outcome of this liaison — Tsumo should be treated as a Good Wife, although her dowry will be nothing more than the No-dachi, Asagiri (see above).

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Once the village of Shinen has been returned to normality, Kumo Ushii and the other dead have been given proper funerals and any survivors of Go-guji's words have been given medical attention (or dealt with as the players see fit), Tsumo Ishisu will ask them to accompany her on her journey home. That journey, what the characters find at the end of it, and the nature of Tsumo's oath are, of course, another adventure...

Credits

Design: **Mike Brunton**
Art: **Brian Williams**
Cartography: **Keith Cooper**
AD&D Stats: **Jim Bambra**

Using THE WORDS OF GO-GUJI with the AD&D® game

THE CURSE OF GO-GUJI: Go-Guji's curse has brought Kumo Ushii and his samurai to a state of undeath — they are neither alive nor dead. Until Go-Guji's body has been removed from the rubbish pit to have both **remove curse** and **bless** spells cast on it, and then given a proper burial, Kumo Ushii and his samurai are unable to die. When wounded, their wounds do not close and they cannot be magically healed; to be sewn back together is all they can hope for. The samurai have two different hit point totals; the first refers to their normal (uncursed) hit points and the second is how much damage they have received since becoming cursed. Those whose cursed hit point total is greater than their normal hit points (eg Kumo Ushii) will drop dead when the curse is removed.

The cursed characters are 'repaired' rather than healed. Whenever their damage matches the first hit point total, they will cease to fight and will drag themselves towards the castle where they will be sewn back together. Gono (see below) can 'repair' two samurai per day. Once repaired the samurai can again take damage equivalent to their normal hit points before requiring 'repair'. The second hit point total is cumulative, 'repair' does not reduce the damage taken, it only allows them to again function normally.

Because of their wounds many of the cursed samurai have a horrific appearance which is very unsettling in combat. Characters attacking them who fail a saving throw vs Spells, attack at -2 to hit. Should a character later encounter a cursed samurai who has already been 'killed', there is an automatic -2 to hit in addition to the one above.

AD&D STATS: All THACOs for fighter characters are based on an increase of +1 (5%) per level (for more information see **DMG** p74).

Encounters

2. Kakati the Karasu Tengu
Kakati appears as a crow-headed man, with arms, wings and clawed feet.
AC 5; MV 12"/24"; HD 5 ; hp 25; #AT 2/1; D 2-8+3/2-8+3 (sword)/1-3 (beak); SA/SD see below; Int high; AL CN; Size M; xp 370; THACO 10 (sword), 15 (beak).
Kakati is a master swordsman, this allows him two attacks per round, gives him a +2 to hit, and the capability of disarming an opponent by rolling 4 or more over the number needed to hit. His reverse cut okuden allows him to attack and defend to his flank and rear, therefore he does not receive any flank or rear armour class penalties and can attack opponents even if they are behind him. If attacked by normal missiles he is able to deflect these with his sword by rolling 6 or more on 1d20.
WEAPONS: Master quality Katana — treat as a **bastard sword +3**.

3. Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka
Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka: AC 4 (scale mail); MV 9"; F4; hp 33/31, 32/5; #AT 1; D 1-10 (nodachi), 2-8 (katana), 1-6 (wakazashi); INT Ave; AL NE; Size M; xp 295, 290; THACO 17.
Hirato Hodaka: AC 4 (scale mail) MV 9"; F3; hp 23/0; #AT 1; D 1-6 (yari), 1-10 (nodachi); Int Ave; AL NE; Size M; xp 177; THACO 18.

The Villagers
90 villagers: AC 10; MV 12"; Lvl 0; hp 2 each; #AT 0; D 0; INT low; AL N; Size M; xp 7 each; THACO N/A.
If attacked the villagers will not defend themselves, they will attempt to hide in their homes or failing that flee into the hills.

Kumo Ushii, Master of Kumo Castle (4th level Fighter)
AC 10 (samurai garb), AC 1 (**banded +2**); MV 12"/9" depending on armour worn; F6; hp 50/67; #AT 1; D 1-8+4 (katana) or 1-6+4 (wakizashi); AL NE; Size M; xp 750; THACO 12 (includes strength and magic bonus) S 18/73 (+2/+3), I 12, W 16, D 15, C 11, Ch 14.
WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Good Katana and Wakizashi (treat both as +1 weapons); no-dachi, yari, naginata and a long bow suitable for characters with a strength of 18/51-75% and 24 armour-piercing arrows available.

Tadaka Kuwe, Kumo's chief retainer (5th level fighter)
AC 10 (samurai garb), 3 (scale mail); MV 12"/9" depending on armour worn; F5; 37/14; #AT 1; D 2-8+1 (katana)/ 1-6+1 (wakizashi); AL NE; Size M; xp 447; THACO 15 (includes strength) S17; I8; W14; D17; C15; Ch 5.
WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Average Katana and Wakizashi; Inferior Katana (treat as weapon -1) — his practice weapon — and a long bow suitable for characters with a strength of 16, with 12 bowel-raker arrows and 6 humming bulb arrows available.
As a result of his face wound Tadaka is blind in his left eye, and the end of his nose is missing. Consequently he suffers partial blindness, and any opponents gain a +2 bonus to hit while attacking him.

Ich'yama (7th level fighter)
AC 3 (partial ninja armour — chain mail), 2 (heavy samurai armour); MV 12"/9" depending on armour worn; F7; hp 32/22; #AT 3/2; D 2-8+1 (katana)/1-6 (wakizashi); Int Ave; AL NE; Size M; xp 1145; THACO 13 (katana), 14 (wakizashi).
Ich'yama's iaijutsu allows him to automatically win initiative on the first round of combat and his Lightning Stroke Okuden entitles him to an immediate second attack (THACO 19) should the first attack miss. On any roll of 19 or 20 to hit, because of his Precision Strike Okuden he inflicts double damage.
WEAPONS: Always carries Good Katana (treat as **bastard sword +1**), Wakizashi and 3 Shuriken. No other weapons available.

Shintaro Fumito, Tadake Ryochi, Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka, and **Noboyasu Emura** (4th Level Fighters)
Shintaro Fumito, Tadake Ryochi, Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka, Noboyasu Emura: AC 10 (samurai garb) 2 (heavy samurai armour); MV 12"/9" depending on armour worn; F4; hp 35/25 each, Tadake 35/80; #AT 1; D 2-8 (katana)/1-6 (wakizashi); Int Ave; AL NE; Size M; xp 305 each; THACO 17.
WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi each; three Yari and two long bows with 24 armour-piercing arrows each available to this group; Shintaro and the Hodaka brothers also have a No-dachi each.

Kaji Yamabushi, Yamato Maki, Mito Ishiyama, Hirato Hodaka and **Mukade Shimokashi** (3rd level fighters)
Kaji Yamabushi (hp 35/80, 225xp), Yamato Maki (hp 30/95, 200xp), Mito Ishiyama (hp 29/7, 195xp), Hirato Hodaka (hp 26/0, 177xp) and Mukade Shimokashi (hp 26/0, 177xp): AC 10 (samurai garb) 3 (heavy samurai armour); MV 12"/9"; F3; hp see above); #AT 1; D 2-8 (katana)/1-6 (wakizashi)/1-6 (yari); Int Ave; AL NE; Size M; THACO 18.
WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi and Yari each; one Dai-kyu (long bow) with 30 armour-piercing arrows available; Hirato Hodaka has an Average No-dachi available; Kaji always carries (or has to hand) a Good (+1 to hit, +1 to dam) Naginata.

Kanchira Yukika and **Kakamei Kono**
Kanchira Yukika (hp 10/88, 70xp), and Kakamei Kono (hp 7/4, 61xp), are the only Ashigaru in the service of Kumo Ushii. AC 10 (samurai garb), 4 (heavy samurai armour); MV 9"; F2; hp see above; #AT 1; D 1-6 (wakizashi)/1-6 (yari); Int Ave; AL NE; Size M; THACO 19.

Kumo Ushii's Prisoners
Azo and Daki the geishas: AC 10; MV 12"; Lvl 0; hp 3 each; #AT N/A; D N/A; Int Ave; AL LN; Size M; THACO N/A.

Gono the Physician
AC 10; MV 12"; C1; 5; #AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD spells; Int Ave; AL LN; Size; THACO 20.
Spells memorised: First level — **create water, purify food and drink.**

Tsumo Ishisu (2nd level Magic User)
AC 10; MV 12"; MU2; hp 6; #AT 1; D by weapon; SA/SD spells; Int Genius; AL LN; Size M; THACO 20.
WEAPONS: None carried.
SPELLS MEMORISED: None
Tsumo has recently developed the ability to project an image of herself (once per day) and she has been using it to alert travellers on the road to her plight.
She had Asagiri (lit 'Morning Mist'), a magical No-dachi in her possession when she was captured. Asagiri is a +2 weapon which allows its user to cast the spells **mirror image** (7 charges) and **protection from normal missiles** (5 charges).
This weapon has been confiscated by Kumo Ushii, but he will not use it because he is ignorant of the weapon's real power and is very afraid of the consequences of its unauthorised use. Tsumo's spell book is also held by Kumo Ushii. It contains the following spells: **comprehend languages, magic missile, shield, read magic, unseen servant** and **ventriloquism**.

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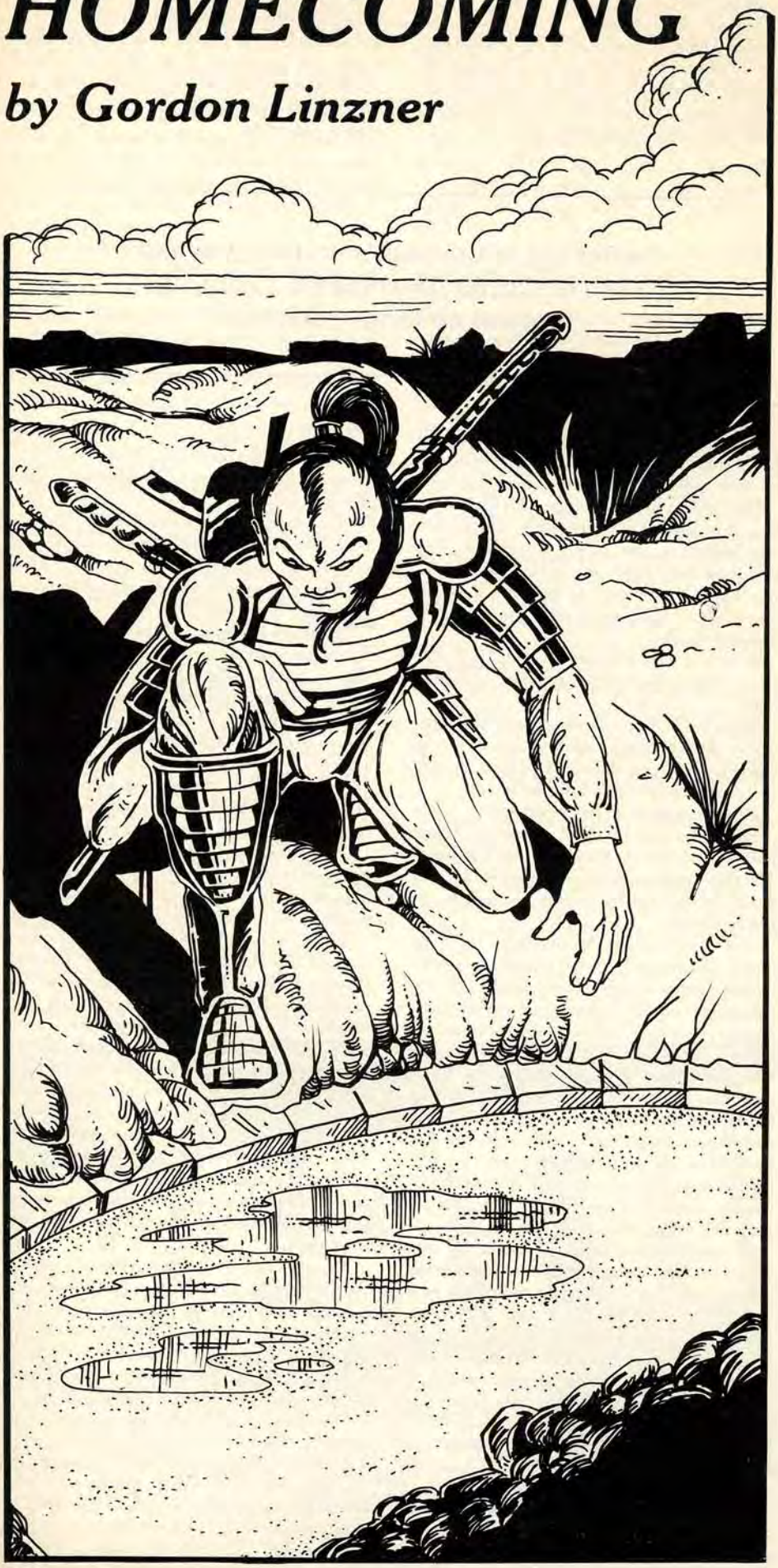
MOSHIGAWA'S HOMECOMING

by Gordon Linzner



Moshigawa Edo paused before the low rubble where the sloping outer wall of his clan's castle had stood. The long climb had tired him. Despite the chilling sea breeze, perspiration crawled under his leather breastplate and the loose folds of the hunting jacket his class usually wore in times of peace. The latter was his only attempt at disguise.

Edo was bareheaded; his elaborate helmet hung behind by its chin-straps. Bow and arrows he'd left with his Tohoku-bred mare in a thicket at the cliff's base. Although the animal had been raised among mountains, this path was too narrow and twisting for her hooves. The regular roads were, of course, barred to him by Hairo patrols. Besides, the cross-winds on a seacoast clifftop made bow shots uncertain. He had his dagger, thrust in his belt, and two fine swords: the long tachi and the shorter katana. A warrior of his skill needed little more. However, Edo anticipated no danger within the ruins.

Edo glanced back the way he'd come. Much of his path was hidden by boulders, stubborn brush, and thicker cover near the bottom. To the right, far below, was an open field once lushly green but now brown with churned-up mud, where he and other children of the clan had sometimes held ferocious battles with hand-made wooden swords, and mercilessly teased any dogs foolish enough to intrude.

On special occasions, competitions were held there. That earth had been shaken by sumo bouts, horseraces, and games such as the soccerlike kemari, as the clansfolk vied among themselves or with guests from nearby provinces. On one of these competition days, Edo had decided there could be no lasting peace with the Hairo clan from the South.

Edo's likable but slow-witted cousin, Kiken, was particularly fond of tako, wherein kite tails fitted with sharp blades were manipulated to cut the cords of opponents' kites. That year, a sudden down-draught had brought a kite down near young Kiken. Without a thought Kiken had grasped it — and had lost his right forefinger to the second joint. Edo recalled his own cry of horror, saw again Kiken's parents rushing to his side as the child tried, through watering eyes, to tie his finger back in place with cloth torn from his kimono.

Above the cries of concern and distress came the braying laughter of Hairo Mouka, heir to Lord Hairo. Edo was tempted to challenge Mouka at that instant, despite the Hairo's advantage in age and weight, but Lord Moshigawa would punish with exile any breaking of their truce. Unfortunately, their paths did not cross afterwards.

Now all but Edo were dead. No Moshigawa infant would chase dragonflies across that green again.

Edo turned grimly to his goal. The Hairo warriors had been thorough. Most of the castle's stones had been cast into the sea from the sheer western cliff. Only enough remained to outline the foundations. Pebbles, fragments of the only home Edo knew, crunched beneath his leather boots. Something glittered as the late morning sun found a gap in the clouds, and Edo stooped to recover a glazed tile, still almost intact, from one of the keep's roofs. The shibi or sea monster decorating the tile was missing a tail and one foot. Edo tucked the fragment into his sleeve and stepped over a low pile of stones where the keep's wall had been.

He strode forward austerely, picturing the structure as it looked before he'd been called

away, slowing only once as he passed the site of the arsenal from which, in his fifteenth year, his first real sword had come. That was the day he'd returned from the monastery after five difficult years of studying such manly pursuits as ancient history, calligraphy, and mastery of the horizontal flute.

He'd lost the flute to a storm at sea two years past, and had not had the chance to replace it. At times he missed its solace. This was such a time.

At last Edo came to the opposite side of the keep, and to the square that he remembered best. Because the castle was small, it possessed but one garden, theoretically reserved for the noble family to the exclusion of warriors and vassals who took on their lord's name. However, Lord Moshigawa was lenient in many things, and the province was remote; he did not have to impress other nobles unduly. Warriors, servants, even peasants visiting the castle on business — all could spend almost as much time in the garden as the noble family and their more honoured guests. Mutual respect kept the sacred spot serene. Edo often wandered its footpaths, meditating or simply escaping the drudgery of his duties. He loved the garden more than anyone else in the castle, apart from the lord.

Now the tears he'd held back began to flow. A few of the hardier shrubs survived, their roots buried deep enough to permit regrowth; they were ragged and ugly out of context. Painstakingly arranged pebbles were irrevocably scattered, bridges burnt, islands smashed to dam rivulets. What had become of that ancient tortoise who'd led him, a boy, to discover many of the subtler, more pleasing secrets that only the gardeners and, perhaps, Lord Moshigawa knew? Worthy creature! He deserved a better fate than that of stew for the bellies of craven Hairo warriors.

A curse escaped Edo's lips, the first word he'd spoken in two days. *He* should have been here to defend his lord's castle, dying with the others if that was how it must end. Instead there'd been that fool's errand for the Emperor, a three-year sea mission to study the feasibility of invading Korea. Edo accepted Japan's need for more land; the islands were so heavily populated now that it was difficult to reward bold warriors with appropriate domains. Yet Emperor after Emperor had looked hungrily across that dangerous stretch of water, without result. Attack Korea or let her be, but why drag the question on for generation after generation? Edo could not fathom the imperial mind. Moshigawa's province was too far from court for the lord to be sucked into meddlesome politics, though not far enough away to avoid certain obligations. Many of Moshigawa's best fighting men died in wars in which no gain could be made. Edo had been conscripted for a spying mission ill-suited to his open nature.

For thirty months, Edo and his company had sailed up and down the Korean coast in a small, poorly constructed ship, under orders not to remain in any port longer than was necessary to resupply, even during typhoon season. Countless sister ships were sunk by those storms, some within reach of land if the sailors could only have seen that land under pitch-coloured sky. Edo's own vessel had limped into its home port at Hirado, barely reaching the dock. While he'd bailed endless buckets of water, his family, home and lord were being destroyed.

At the garden's centre was a wide pool which, Edo noted with surprise, retained its original shape except for a section of its northern shore. Water still filled the depression, but without the constant flow of man-made streams it had stagnated. A thin green scum coated the surface. Those extraordinarily beautiful fish that had dwelt here — could any have escaped the slaughter? It was impossible, of course, but Edo knelt, cleared a patch of scum with the side of his hand, and peered below the surface.

Yuki smiled, but he could not smile back, thinking of what the Hairo must have done if she were too slow to take her own life... or even if she'd succeeded.

A sea breeze whipped across the plateau, turned the perspiration on Edo's back to ice. He did not shiver. He'd endured worse cold while training as a warrior. Even when the castle stood, these offshore winds often froze its inhabitants. Nonetheless, Edo found the atmosphere disquieting.

Reflected in the pool's waters was the keep of Castle Moshigawa ... but the original no longer existed.

At first he saw only his own scarred face, its hardened eyes glaring back at him. He moved his head aside ... and a gasp escaped his lips.

His right hand clutched the hilt of his tachi, though he did not draw the blade. The gesture was instinctive; no enemy threatened. Edo jerked his head right, left, behind, up. Above was the cold grey sky; to the west, the even greyer sea. Rubble surrounded the last of the Moshigawa clan.

A trick of memory, Edo thought. He looked again. Then he decided that grief had driven him mad.

Reflected in the pool's waters were the upper stories of the keep of Castle Moshigawa. Due to clever landscaping, the keep had been the only part of the castle visible from the pond.

And the original no longer existed.

Edo dried his hand on wine-dark cotton trousers and drew the glazed tile from his sleeve. The shibi's image grinned, as if it knew a secret it would not tell. With the tile, Edo cleared a larger patch of pond.

Yes, that was the Moshigawa keep. The gently tapering lines of the hipped roofs were unmistakeable. Crude in comparison with the magnificent castles built in recent years in open country, its simple ornamentation warmed his nostalgic mood. Behind those shuttered windows were the arsenal, storehouses, audience chambers and private apartments of the lord's family. Edo had only heard second-hand reports of the beauty to be found in the latter rooms, but he could imagine it, had done so often. From the highest point of the keep, one could on a clear day see past farms and forests to the highest point of the keep at Hairo Castle.

A woman's face appeared beside his own reflection. Edo glanced behind to assure himself that this was but another phantom of the past rather than some silent assassin, then stared down at her. He did not recognise her until she smiled, revealing fashionably blackened teeth. Then it seemed incredible that he had not at once known his younger sister, Yuki. When Edo left, Yuki was a month shy of her first eyebrow plucking. A few months made a great difference in women at that age. The lord's fourth son, Edo recalled, had been attracted to Yuki even then.

Such a waste! And he'd never have known what she looked like before her death, except for this curious window on the land of the dead.

Why had he come here? To see for himself that the castle had been razed, of course, else he would not have believed it. To stand among the ghosts of those who'd mattered most to him. He'd not expected to see one of the ghosts, nor to discover that the castle itself possessed an otherworldly shadow. It was seductive to think that he might sit here calmly, seeing things as they were, for the rest of his life...

Edo shook his head to clear it. The helmet's chin-straps chafed his neck. The long climb, after a perilous ride through what was now enemy territory with little time for food and less for sleep, was taking its toll. He needed to rest — but not here. If he lingered overlong, he would not wish to leave. And the clan of Moshigawa must somehow be avenged. One man could not accomplish much against the combined might of Hairo, but he would do what he could.

One more glance into the pool, and Edo would leave his home for the last time. He hoped to send many Hairo ahead of him before he joined his fellow clansmen in the land of ghosts.

Yuki's face had gone, but another came forward. Edo started as he recognized the hated features of Hairo Mouka, he who'd mocked the unfortunate Kiken years before. Why was Mouka on the grounds of the Moshigawa Castle of the afterworld? According to all accounts of the siege, the heir had come through the battle unscathed. If the reports were false, so much the better, but would the arrogant Mouka be thrust upon those he'd wronged? Was there as little justice in the next world as in this one?

Edo's absorption almost cost him his life. The scrape of a blade leaving its scabbard, however, was too familiar a sound for Edo to mistake it for anything else.

Mouka's sword slashed air where, a second earlier, Edo's neck had been. Not entirely air; Edo felt a warm trickle below his left ear. He could not judge the depth of the cut, but it was not a death blow, and nothing less would save from a warrior's wrath the craven who'd attacked from behind.

Mouka laughed in the same high-pitched, braying manner that had burned itself in young Edo's mind that competition day. Seeing the accusation in his foe's eyes, Mouka said, 'Any man who lets an enemy come so close deserves his fate.'

'Who strikes from the rear is no man,' Edo spat.

Mouka's laughter died. 'My retainers saw you skulking through the hills. As future lord of Hairo, I felt it my duty to deal with the last Moshigawa. You knelt as if inviting death.'

'I neither skulked nor advertised my presence. Hairo patrols trembled in the bushes as a true warrior rode past.'

'I shall treat you as my clan did your castle.'

'With words?' Edo mocked, rising.

No further words were exchanged. The roar of the sea seemed very far away, and even gulls shunned this place of slaughter. The two men faced each other, swords raised, legs braced, ready to fight and yet unmoving, each studying his opponent.

Edo's only armour was the leather breastplate, no surety against a well-made blade — and the Hairo heir would have no lesser weapon. Mouka wore the full wardress of a samurai, including a breastplate of lacquered steel and stiff greaves that rose above his knees. He'd been skilful to approach so near in that regalia without being heard. Mouka was also fresh. He'd ridden but a few hours to reach this place, along the gentler sloping main road to the fortress's former gates.

Edo felt a tremor in his right calf. He could not hold this position much longer, and he dare not show his weakness. Although he was not ready, he attacked.

Steel flashed, unaccompanied by the sound of metal on metal. In Japanese fighting, swords rarely touched; the weapons were not designed for defence. The best way to spoil a quality blade was to use it as a shield.

Mouka twisted his thick torso, allowing Edo's blade to sheer harmlessly past. He pressed his own attack at once. The Moshigawa barely recovered in time to withdraw, and then could gain no respite, for Mouka did not pause. The Hairo knew he had his rival. Edo's attack was clumsy. A few strokes would disarm him.

Edo sensed his doom, but did not yield to despair. He cared little about dying. He'd even welcome the opportunity to join the others of his clan. To lose any hope of avenging them, however, was a bitter pill. He would be satisfied to take but one Hairo with him — especially if that one was Mouka.

He dodged a blow, knowing as he did so that he'd moved too late. Mouka's blade swung towards his bared skull, and Edo could do nothing to stop it.

Then a mossy rock gave way beneath Edo's foot.

Arms flailing, hand gripping his tachi, Edo flipped backwards into the stagnant pool. A spout of water enveloped him. He gasped for air, spat foul liquid, felt sharp agony as his elbow struck a stone on the pool's bottom.

Mouka waited at the pond's edge. Thrashing wildly, Edo might strike a deadly blow without trying. Or the Moshigawa could crack his skull and drown, saving the Hairo the trouble of running him through and having to clean his blade.

Edo splashed, putting more distance between himself and his foe before struggling to his feet. He cleared his eyes with a shake of the head. The pool was not deep; the water rose no higher than his thighs. He positioned his sword and watched for Mouka's next attack.

The Hairo heir did not relish wading in the stale, ill-smelling pool, but the near miss angered him. The game was no longer enjoyable; time to end it quickly. Edo would be even less of a match for him, after that ignoble fall. Mouka smiled savagely and stepped forward.

'Prepare for death, Moshigawa,' he advised.

Edo held up his weapon, despite the pain that shot through his sword arm. Mouka could easily parry whatever stroke he made now, following with a death thrust. Yet Edo had to lash out a final time. One did not give up a fight simply because it seemed hopeless, not when one's life depended on the outcome.

Mouka halted two swords' lengths from Edo. The latter's eyes narrowed. Was this some new sport of the cruel heir? No. The confidence in Mouka's face gave way to horror. The man strove to come nearer, but could not move his legs.

'What cowardly trick is this?' Mouka demanded.

Edo shook his head.

Mouka suddenly slashed the water with his long sword. The absurdity of the action so startled the fatigued Edo that he did not use the opening to attack.

Then Mouka was waist-deep in green water. Edo thought of quicksand, but how the gardeners could have created such a pit at the bottom of a pond built atop a cliff of solid rock was beyond him. It was purposeless, as well. Besides, he himself had fallen in the same spot, moving further in to regain his balance. Why hadn't he been sucked down?

Mouka's sword hand dipped, and at once the arm plunged down to the elbow, tachi and all. Edo slowly approached his rival. As he came alongside, Mouka cried out and vanished below the surface. Air bubbled up.

When Edo saw what had pulled Mouka down, he trembled without shame — but only for a moment.

Hands gripped the Hairo by ankles, calves, wrists. Burly arms wrapped around the warrior's chest, holding him to the floor of the pool. Another hand covered Mouka's mouth, even as the heir's death cry helped drown him... and this hand lacked a forefinger from the second joint.

Edo drew his dagger and slit Mouka's throat. The various hands seemed to relax their grips before the water reddened, so that nothing could be seen below the surface. The last breathing Moshigawa turned and climbed onto dry land, his outer breeches stained with his nemesis' diluted blood.

Moshigawa Edo shuddered in the salt breeze as he fumbled for a scrap of cloth with which to dry his tachi. He perched on a chunk of masonry to contemplate the pool of death. More than insubstantial ghosts resided there. The hand that covered Mouka's mouth at the last could almost have belonged to cousin Kiken, except that it had been a left hand. Kiken had lost his finger from the right.

Still, were not images reversed in reflection?

Edo stripped to his loincloth and arranged his clothing on the stones to be dried by wind and the sporadic sun. His spare clothing was with his mare, which had undoubtedly been found and taken by Hairo retainers. He had no reason now to leave the ruins. Mouka was headstrong, but he would not have come here alone without telling someone. The patrols on the roads to Moshigawa Castle would come looking for him.

Edo smiled for the first time in three years. Let them come, he thought. I shall not meet them alone.

The Moshigawa clan survived in their reflected images; they would not now abandon Edo.

Gordon Linzner

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by Graeme Davis

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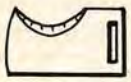
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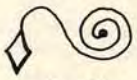
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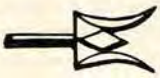
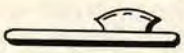
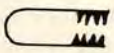

Hwa-Kek (head)


Kapak


Penjepit

Sang Kauw

Hongkiam-Kek (head)

Rante

Tjaluk

Segu

Arbir

Chinese and Japanese martial arts are comparatively well-known in the West; indeed, the term 'martial arts' is often used to refer only to the Chinese and Japanese forms. Among the islands of Indonesia, however, there is a bewildering number and variety of local martial art forms, extensively detailed in Donn F Draeger's book **Weapons and Fighting Arts of Indonesia**, which might be used by the DM of an **AD&D**® game as an interesting source of exotic weapons for the Monk or for other character classes, while the **Bushido** enthusiast will find a wide range of new 'exotic' bugei which can provide interesting variants for the Budoka.

Many of the weapons, particularly the wide range of knives, swords and polearms, may be treated for game purposes as equivalent to European or Japanese weapons listed in the rulebooks of the two games (for adaptations of some of the more distinctive Japanese weapons to an **AD&D** format see my earlier article), but there are several completely 'new' weapons and techniques, which are adapted below into both AD&D and **Bushido** formats. Cost and availability are left to the individual referee to determine; although many of the weapons may be improvised with relative ease, and others will be fairly common in their 'home' area, many will only be known and used within that area, so that it may prove difficult to come by not only the weapons but also tuition in their use.

Weapon Descriptions

(see Tables I and II)

Arbir: A type of polearm, similar to a naginata but with a very heavy shaft about 2" in diameter, and a broad spike at the butt end to enhance the effectiveness of butt strikes. Overall length is about 5'.
Chometi: A whip of leather, human hair or chain, 3-5' long, with a long handle. May be used to entangle.
Hui-tho: A flexible weapon similar to a Rante (qv), consisting of a blade, normally rhomboidal in shape, fixed to a 3' length of cord. May be used to entangle.
Kapak: A small throwing hatchet with a broad convex cutting edge, often hidden in the sleeves or neck of a garment.
Kiam Bokiam: A wooden or bamboo 'sword', similar to Kendo bokken or practice swords.
Kowlium: A short polearm, with the appearance of a boathook to which a spearhead has been attached. May be used to disarm.
Paku: A double pointed throwing spike, used as a shuriken, 2-3" long. Supposedly very difficult to master.
Pendjepit: A pair of tongs, like cocktail-bar ice tongs, with spikes on the inner faces. Used against lightly armoured opponents to tear the flesh in thrusting attacks.
Petjat: A rigid or semi-rigid whip of coconut fibre, 4-6' long. Normally used for blinding attacks to the face.
Piau: A heavy type of shuriken, consisting of a roughly rectangular plate of metal with a deep-cut concave cutting edge in one side and a slot at one end, used in throwing.
Rante: A flexible weapon consisting of a length of light chain ending in a spike, blade, or weight. May be used to entangle.
Segu: A truncheon of soft metal, of a similar shape to a tonfa, but held by one end rather than by the perpendicular handle.

Other Weapons

There is a wide variety of knives and cleavers used in the various forms of silat; most common are the **Psiau**, a short general-purpose knife of varying form and dimensions; the **Parang**, a machete-type bush knife varying in length from 10" to 36"; and the **Pedang**, a short single-edged sword. Similar to the Pedang is the **Golok**, a heavy cleaver-type knife with a broad, blunt tip, similar to the European medieval Falchion. Other more localised forms include the **Kelewang**, a single-edged longsword with a notch on the top edge near the tip, the **Kujungi**, a short knife with an extremely complex serrated blade, the **Tjaluk**, a short, claw-shaped double-edged ripping knife whose two edges reputedly make it a very difficult weapon to block, and the **Pringabus** and **Tadji**, which are stilettos similar to the Japanese Aiguchi, the former of bamboo and the latter of metal. The Chien, paired Chinese double-edged shortswords, and the Japanese Katana are also widely used.

Exotic Weapons — Table I: Statistics for the AD&D® game

Name	Weight (gp)	Damage S/M	Damage L	Length	Space Req'd	Speed Factor	AC Adjustment 10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Arbir	75	1-6	1-10	5′	3′	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	-1	-2	-3
Chometi	20-40	1-3	1-2	3-5′	5′	6	—	-1	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
Hui-tho	5	1-4	1-2	3′	5′	7	+1	—	-1	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
Kapak	10	1-4	1-3	½-1′	—	(fire rate 2)	+1	—	—	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Kiam Bokiam	25	1-4	1-4	3′	4′	5	+1	—	—	-1	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Kowlium	50	1-4	1-4	c 5′	3′	5	—	—	—	—	—	-1	-1	-1	-2
Paku	1	1-2	1-2	2-3″	—	(fire rate 3)	+1	—	+1	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5
Pendjepit	5	1-2	1-2	4-6″	—	1	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
Petjat	5	1-3	1-2	4-6″	5′	7	+1	—	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7
Piau	3	1-3	1-2	3-4″	—	(fire rate 2)	+3	+1	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-4	-6
Rante	10	1-3	1-2	4-6′	3	6	+1	—	—	-1	-1	-2	-2	-4	-6
Segu	25	2-5	1-3	1′	—	1	+3	—	+2	+1	—	—	-1	-2	-3

Exotic Weapons — Table II: Statistics for Bushido

Name	Min STR	Range	Damage	Weight (lb)
Arbir	10	Long/Medium	D6 (Butt D3+1)	8
Chometi	5	Medium	D3	3
Hui-tho	2	Flex	D3+1 (Entangle)	0.5
Kapak[1]	2	Missile	D3+1	1
Kiam Bokiam	10	Medium	D6-2	3
Kowlium	10	Long/Medium	D6 (Butt D3, Disarm)	5
Paku[1]	2	Missile	D3-1	0.25
Pendjepit	5	Short	D3	1
Petjat	5	Long/Medium	D3+1	1
Piau[1]	2	Missile	D3+1	0.5
Rante	2	Flex	D3+1 (Entangle)	1
Segu	10	Medium	D6-1	3

[1] These weapons may be used by untrained characters who are skilled in Shurikenjutsu, at a penalty of -10% to current Shurikenjutsu score. Except as noted, all weapons are governed by 'exotic' bugei.

The most distinctive of the Indonesian knives is the **Kris**, a broad-hilted dagger with an undulating, snakelike profile, which may vary in length from 5" to 30". The Kris is surrounded by a great deal of folklore; all are assumed to have a spirit, and some have been reported to have magical powers, such as the ability to wound or kill by being pointed at an enemy (similar to the **AD&D** spell **finger of death**), or by striking the shadow or footprint of the victim. Some have been known to warn their owners of danger by rattling in the sheath, while others have leaped into their owners' hands or even fought by themselves, like the **D&D dancing sword**, and several have been said to be able to scare off attacking wild animals by their mere appearance.

There are several detectable Chinese and Japanese influences in the present forms of silat, and this shows up most clearly in the forms of some of the weapons. The **Tjabang** is a weapon almost identical to the Jitte, and the **Toya** is very similar to the Bo staff. The **Siangkiam** are a pair of short batons, similar to the Jo stick but with pointed ends to allow an additional stabbing attack, and the **Kwanto** and **Sjang Sutai** are both polearms similar to the Japanese Naginata or European Glaive, while the **Kwai** has the appearance of a Tonfa made by pushing the main shaft through a hole in the blocky crosspiece.

Local forms of polearm are many and often complicated; while there are several Naginata derivatives, there are also more complex designs, such as the **Kwa-kek** and **Hongkiam-kek**, which seem best classified as Fauchard-Guisarme and Fauchard respectively for **AD&D** purposes, or as exotic forms of Ono, double-edged and single-edged respectively, for the **Bushido** system. Straight and Kris bladed spears are also common, and trident-type weapons, sometimes with up to seven tines are also used in some areas. One weapon which seems to be intermediate between a polearm and a hand-to-hand weapon is the **Sang Kauw**, a paired long-handled pruning-hook with the appearance of a very light Guisarme or Fumata-yari.

Medium and close-range weapons include the **Roti Kalong**, a type of knuckle-duster which might be equated with Japanese Shuko, and the **Tekken**, a short cane with a crooked end like a walking stick, used for blocking and tripping an opponent.

Unarmed Combat

The forms of unarmed combat vary considerably from area to area, but for the most part they may be considered, for game purposes, to be equivalent to the Japanese arts of Karate or Judo for which rules already exist. Some aspects and techniques, however, are sufficiently distinctive to warrant a separate description.

One technique common to many local silat forms is the ability to rise from an apparently casual sitting or squatting position into an attack in one sudden and very swift move, gaining surprise against an opponent who believes himself to have the upper hand.

The **Setia Hati Terate** form is primarily an evasive system, and makes extensive use of rapid hand movements (as well as mesmerism, it is reported) to confuse and misdirect an attacker, while the **Kumango Silat** of Menangkabau specialises in blocking attacks and evading holds; this skill might be rendered into AD&D terms by suggesting that a Monk of 8th level or higher practising this art in combat be allowed a saving throw vs Breath, modified by dexterity, to parry any open hand attack or evade or escape from any lock or hold. This may be extended, at 12th or higher level, to escape from bonds or entanglement.

Perhaps the most unusual unarmed combat form is **Hariman Silat** ('Tiger Silat'), again from Menangkabau, where all combat takes place from recumbent or semi-recumbent positions, consisting of scything hooks with legs and arms and diving grapple attacks. This form is said to have developed from combat on wet and slippery rock surfaces, where standing and fighting in an upright position is difficult, and as well as giving the practitioner an advantage on treacherous footing, also means that he is far from helpless when knocked down, and may quickly gain the upper hand against an overconfident opponent. For game purposes, this style is best treated under the rules already established for judo with regard to holds and grappling attacks.

Graeme Davis

RUBIC OF MOGREDON
THE CHAMPION OF LOGRES RODE FORTH.
DON'T FRET DEAR – I'LL GET YOU ANOTHER ONE...
AND MANY ADVENTURES BEFELL HIM ON HIS WAY.
STAND ASIDE, VARLET! DO NOT IMPEDE MY GOOD AND HOLY QUEST!
ALMS! AAARGH!
UNGHH!
BOOT!
I AM THE KNIGHT OF THE RUSTIC BRIDGE! NO MAN MAY CROSS SAVE HE WHO BESTS ME IN THE JOUST!
THEN FIE UPON YOU FOR A JAUNDICE! I SHALL FIND SOME OTHER WAY, FOR I MAY NOT TARRY IN MY GOOD AND HOLY QUEST!
WHITHER THE NECROMANCER'S TOWER, PEASANT?
MY LORD, I KNOW NOT. BUT WE ARE SORE OPPRESSED BY A GIANT MASHED PIG WHICH DEVOURETH OUR CROPS, AND DUNGETH UPON OUR HOVELS. AID US, I PRAY THEE!
IMPUDENT WRETCH! I CANNOT DELAY MY GOOD AND HOLY QUEST!
AID US! FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!
OUCH!
SOME YEARS LATER...
HO THERE! I AM ON A GOOD AND HOLY QUEST, AND SEEK LUXURY ACCOMODATION FOR THE NIGHT!
RUBIC – YOU'VE ONLY FIVE MINUTES LEFT TO SAVE MOGREDON.
STRONG EVIL BEARING DEAD AHEAD!..
**** MOGREDON!
WHAT ABOUT ME?

CRASIMOFF'S WORLD

LARGEST PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME IN THE UK

A Play-By-Mail game with a D&D flavour'

'Undoubtedly, CRASIMOFF'S WORLD is a highly worthy game. It has been running for several years now and has a large number of players. Compared to others of its kind it is not expensive and it goes out of its way to encourage communication between players. I found the initial scenario interesting, and the world lived up to this promise. The fact that they are hand-written merely testifies to the immense amount of effort put in by the GM. So, with its regular newsletter, Crasimoff's World is a friendly, efficient and relatively cheap game to play, and if you wish to try a commercial PBM game with a distinctly D&D game-ish flavour, I would unhesitatingly recommend it.'

As reviewed in IMAGINE 18

Earth Wood

THE MAJOR US PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME

EARTHWOOD has been running for over 3 years in America and currently has over 2,000 players. KJC games has been granted the exclusive right to moderate this unique computer-moderated Play-By-Mail game in the UK. Twenty-five players compete all the cities of Earthwood and be the ultimate player. A typical game will last about 18 months with the first knockouts after six months.

Each player is either a king or a fantasy race or a powerful charismatic character in this world of conquest and sorcery. Your character or king controls several groups, each of which is totally independent of the others. You can recruit NPC trolls, wildmen and others into your service, or even control such powerful creatures as dragons or giant spiders. Your characters may also control or capture cities, upon which you can spend gold to improve security, increase your workshop's production, build defences and maintain or enlarge you army. With gold your wizards can undertake magical research to increase their power and knowledge and thus aid your armies in battle. Spies can search out enemy strongholds, attempt to do acts of sabotage, theft and assassination. These are just a few of the options available to a player in EARTHWOOD.

EARTHWOOD is completely computer-moderated, but the turn sheet and replies are written in plain English so that you can easily understand them. No need to look through complex charts and code books to understand this game.

If you wish to enrol in CRASIMOFF'S WORLD or EARTHWOOD, send a £5.00 cheque/PO payable to KJC Games. For this you will receive a rulebook, set-up material, the latest newsletter and the first four rounds. Future rounds are £1.25 each. European rates are as UK.

Return to:
KJC Games,
5 Vicarage Avenue,
Cleveleys, Blackpool,
LANCASHIRE FY5 2BD.

GAME COMPANY

Clubs

If you have a club to advertise, or wish to find a club in your area, you can place a free notice in this column. Just write to IMAGINE™ magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge

First, existing groups...

BLACKPOOL: Fylde Fantasists concentrate on MERP but also play AD&D, Cthulhu and others if there's enough interest. Wargames also. No-one under 16. Free first week, 50p thereafter. Contact Steve Barr on Blackpool 47105.

BRADFORD University Fantasy Wargames Club meets at Richmond Building, in the Mezzanine, on Tuesday evenings, 6.30-12pm.

ERITH, Kent: Erith Wargames Group meets every first and third Tuesday from 7-10pm at the Church Hall in Mill Road. Contact Andy Fletcher on Dartford (0322) 335008 or Rex Smith on Dartford 330444.

PORTCHESTER, Hants: Portchester FRP & Wargames Club meets the first Sunday of every month at the Portchester Parish Hall, Castle St, 10.30-21.30. Contact Tom Morgan on Cosham 379451 Extn 2446.

SOUTHWELL, Notts: A (currently namesless) games club meets at Easthorpe Hall every other Saturday, 2-5pm. Currently 20 strong, they play AD&D, D&D, Car Wars and Warhammer. Fees 30-40p, depending on numbers. Secondary school age or above welcome. Ring Chairman (Southwell 812890) or Secretary (813728) between 8pm and 9.30pm, or write to the Secretary at 15 Pinewood Close, Southwell, Notts.

SWINTON, Manchester: Warlocks and Warriors, an AD&D, D&D, T&T playing group; will play anything, even Cthulhu. Contact Trog, 9 Lime Avenue, Swinton, Manchester for details. Also nearby clubs, contact us for competitions - Thanks.

Now will lone gamers please come forward...

EALING: Stranded fighter (18) seeks club/fellow players. CoC, AD&D. M Platt, 11a Montpelier Avenue, Ealing W5 2XP. Tel 977 9771

GLASGOW: 18-year-old Bushido player, willing to try other games, is looking for players in the Govanhill, Toryglen area. Write to James Calderwood, 30 Boyd St, Govanhill, Glasgow, or phone 423 7140.

STAMFORD: Is your role-playing group willing to take on a novice? Please contact Steve at 31 Mountbatten Avenue, Stamford, Lincs if so. Telephone 53069.

Events

Further details of some events have appeared in previous issues.

MANORCON: Those who thought you'd missed Manorcon '85 because it clashed with GamesFair may have the chance to attend after all: no details as yet, but it is likely to take place in July.

YORCON: the Dragonara and Queens hotels, Leeds, on 5-8 April.

EUROCON: Eindhoven, 12-14 April.

STUDENT NATIONAL WARGAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS: Bradford University, 13-14 April, for Tabletop and Fantasy Wargames, with trade stands and AD&D and RQ competitions. Information from Fantasy Wargames Club, University of Bradford Union, Richmond Road, Bradford, W Yorks.

LEICESTER POLYTECHNIC WARGAMES CONVENTION: Provisional dates 20-21 April.

SOL III: the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, 3-6 May.

ALBACON 85: Central Hotel, Glasgow, 18-22 July. GoH H Ellison, Anne McCaffrey. Details: 20 Hillingdon Gdns, Cardonald, Glasgow.

CAMCON: aka Unicon 6, New Hall college, Cambridge, 13-15 September. Details from Neil Taylor, Perspective Design Ltd, 9 Pembroke Street, Cambridge CB2 3QY

NOVACON 15: Write to Phil Probert for details of this November (?) convention: 32 Digby House, Colletts Grove, Kinghurst, Birmingham.

TIMEMASTER

Bored with medieval fantasy adventures, tired of laser-toting aliens, or fed-up with losing your sanity? If you are, **Timemaster** may be just the game for you. As a member of the Time Corps in the 27th Century it is your duty to return to the dark and distant past to ensure that no-one tampers with history. Opposing you are the Demoreans and renegade time travellers.

The Demoreans are evil shape-shifting aliens from another parallel, dedicated to disrupting history. In various guises they journey to the past and there do their utmost to alter history. The past is a haven to numerous renegades, time travellers who care little whether their actions cause any disrupt the fabric of time.

Agents of the Time Corps are recruited from a period in Earth's past and brought to the 27th Century. Here they are trained and given the best equipment the Corps can provide. A wide variety of skills is available to player characters, from impersonation and investigation to martial arts and beam weapons skills. Time Corps agents are also trained in various paranormal talents — such as *paranormal memory* which allows characters to remember how things should be even if history has been altered, or *telepathic probe* which allows Time Corps agents to determine a person's true identity — very useful for identifying shape-changing Demoreans.

Included in the box are the rulebook, a Guide to the Continuum (which provides background on a number of historical periods), a short introductory adventure, a map and counters.

Time paradoxes, such as accidentally killing one's own grandmother or visiting a time where you already exist, are handled in a logical and methodical manner. To assist players in their roles, detailed regulations govern the behaviour of Time Corps agents. Agents are forbidden to reveal the existence of the Corps or to take human life unnecessarily.

Numerous parallels exist as well; alternate earths and some really alien parallels where the laws of physics differ greatly. Timemaster offers a wide variety of settings, allowing many diverse adventures to be played. Play is very episodic, but this can be overcome by running extended adventures in one time period.

The rules are generally well presented and clear; unfortunately the introductory adventure is not. It looks rushed and contains a number of flaws. It is set on the Western Front in 1917 and the picture it paints of the area is ludicrous — German soldiers smoking cigarettes with their heads clearly visible above the tops of the trenches. You would think anyone stupid enough to do that would have died long ago! The adventure also follows a set course, but information in the characters' historical speciality data is likely to have players wishing to take a different course from that presented in the module. Whether this kind of plotting is going to be a feature of further Timemaster adventures remains to be seen.

With its infinite variety of settings Timemaster has a lot of potential. Players can experience many different situations and save the world numerous times over. I only hope that future modules are of a higher standard than the one in the box. Otherwise Timemaster is destined to be just another rpg.

Jim Bambra

Save the President (STP) comes highly recommended — by its own designer! His photograph adorns the box lid next to an effusive endorsement of the game, and his name seems to be everywhere in the rulebook and components. I'd rather a game stood on its own merits. Fortunately, I persevered; STP is a memorable game which should always be given house room.

It is an interesting premise. The US President must journey from the White House to the Capitol for his Inauguration. Players are American or Russian undercover agents: their mission — to protect or kill him. The two sides are often blurred; I have seen the President killed by a CIA agent! How come? First, players keep their identity concealed. Second, the Presidential route is not pre-determined. It can prove difficult to give him adequate cover or to shoot him. This 'rideabout' is unrealistic but it

Halls of the Dwarven Kings

Opening the box for the first time, no purchaser of **Halls of the Dwarven Kings** is likely to be disappointed. This is a lavishly-equipped DM aid, the product of the joint talents of Beast Entz — the publishers of **Tortured Souls**! — and Endless Plans. So, for your £7.95, you get a scenario booklet, a DM's screen containing the maps and a quick reference guide, several sheets of Endless Plans to enable the DM to rereate the locations of the Halls, and several artifacts to hand to players at key points in the adventure. All are of good quality; I don't think anybody will complain about the value for money of this boxed set.

The scenario itself didn't quite come off. There are loose pages giving extensive details of the major NPCs, which allow plenty of opportunity for role-playing, but the adventure itself is a tense, edgy affair for players if DM'd according to the booklet, and there is an increasing temptation to swing the sword first, and delve into the hidden depths of the characters second... I strongly recommend DMs not to make the Dwarves too hostile at first, contrary to what might be implied by the adventure description. There's an excellent plot going on in the background, which the players can only truly understand through interaction with the NPCs — don't let the fighting start from the first room.

The DM should otherwise find HDK a delight to run. The screen/maps are very clear in themselves, although if the floor plans are to be used for figures, etc, the DM must do as much preparatory work on these as possible, as the relations between the various pieces is not always easy to see. The clues have a nice feel — although it is rather naïve of the designer to advise DMs to add to these. My players can just about recognise my handwriting when compared to printed material. These two faults aside, the DM has everything readily at hand.

This is a good package. If it is not a great scenario, it certainly isn't one of the worst I've ever run, and with some creative alterations, can be very good. Be warned, HDK does need work — it's written in a loose **RuneQuest** style which makes it possible to translate into either of the D&D games, but not easy. But if you're the sort of DM who likes to buy ideas and work out the details after, this is an excellent product.

Paul Cockburn

SAVE THE PRESIDENT

works. Much of the game's atmosphere is generated by action cards. The physical quality of these, and of the counters, is poor. A glossier feel could have been given to them, but at a higher cost no doubt. One welcome touch is the inclusion of six player pamphlets which ease play.

So, as 'The Old Duffer' moves, players activate their agents, try to neutralize others and hustle for position. The opportunities for confounding your rivals are great. Pieces move down a multi-coloured geometric street network, although some of the colours are hard to differentiate on my copy. Movement is by no means certain as access can be refused and routes can be mined. Even once some of your agents are in position, success is not guaranteed. The President must first be wounded; a second shot terminates (note CIA-type jargon). The Firing Rules are simple yet clever; the chance of a hit depends on the President's position in relation to the placing and number of agents round him on the road grid. Rival agents may be in a position either to help or hinder an assassination attempt. US agents may make, or help in, a long-odds attempt to conceal their true identities a little longer.

Overall, STP does not live up to its designer's extravagant claims, but it is a strong design, offering a diverting contest of bluff and chance. One game option includes the Soviet Premier on a State Visit and several additional scenarios are available, but I haven't seen these. For its price STP has few serious competitors but be warned... it is rough out there on the streets. At his second inauguration Lincoln offered 'malice toward none'. Don't bring that kind of namby-pamby, humanitarian attitude with you to STP. It won't get you very far...

Mike Perry

Product Information

Timemaster is a Pacesetter game, obtainable through Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP

Halls of the Dwarven Kings, produced by Beast Entz/Endless Plans, costs £7.95 from Beast Enterprises, Divinity Rd, Oxford

Save the President is from Games for Pleasure, 9 Avenue Road, London N12 8PY. Price £9.99

UK5 - Eye of the Serpent and **CB2 - Conan Against Darkness** are modules for the AD&D® game from TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge. £4.95 each.

Addresses are for information only; products should be available from your local games shop

AD&D®: Eye of the Serpent

After the glowing words I wrote about the UK series of modules in my review of UK4, **UK5** had a lot to live up to.

The module can be played as a group adventure or one-on-one (one player, one DM) with the player choosing to be a Ranger, Druid or Monk character, all 1st level. The character is then accompanied by three NPCs as they try to make their way down a rather artificial-looking mountain valley and thence to the Eye of the Serpent. To my mind one player and three NPCs is stretching the one-on-one idea a bit and indeed we playtested it as a group adventure.

The main part of the module is the descent of the mountain which consists of numerous encounters linked by various routings which can either be open or closed depending on the principal character chosen. The idea is that by controlling what the party encounters the DM creates an opportunity to use the special abilities of the chosen principal character. An unfortunate side-effect, however, is that there is virtually only one path to take down the mountain. This means that the module becomes just a fixed series of encounters with very little choice of direction for the players. Admittedly you are free to open or close any of the routings but it seemed pointless to change the suggested routings before trying them.

Excessive use is made of monsters from MMII, nearly as many as from the MM and 1½ times the number from the FF. However, it is no great problem to improvise from the statistics given or just to substitute a better-known creature.

On the whole, then, a novel idea which has obviously had a lot of work put into it but which doesn't quite come off.

Chris Hunter

AD&D®: Conan Against Darkness

The module **Conan Against Darkness** sports an effective cover still of Conan, and the whole package is attractive. I spotted only two slips — erroneous references to maps — in the entire adventure. Information for players in the text is 'boxed' for clarity, enhancing the layout. Quality artwork is scattered throughout: monochrome maps on a pull-out sheet; three-colour maps and a full colour map on the cover. All are clear to the DM, bar one oddity where a secret entrance moves.

Thoth-Amon is a sorceror taking over the world, and he now intends to dispose of Conan. Conan gathers three friends and sets off on a journey of epic proportions. Players can use their own characters, but the module is written around the characters of Conan & Co, so this is not recommended. The scenario is split into episodes, most separated by healing/travelling time. This structure makes the adventure disjointed, and sometimes purposeless. The method of interfacing between episodes is badly executed sometimes, for example when the vampire 'can't resist betraying Thoth-Amon' before leaving, and players felt they were being manipulated.

The encounters within the episodes are rarely stimulating, and often overwritten. For example, one observation to be read to players is *'You hear no other sounds but the rumble of a heavy chariot and the heavy breathing of the great demons'*. The characters cannot see anything: do they know what demons' breath sounds like?

Survival is difficult, though the fast healing rate partly compensates for the extreme violence and lack of clerics. The rule alterations are to support the special campaign background for Conan, also introducing Fear and Heroism: these are implemented well in the AD&D environment.

However, the journey does not adapt well to a scenario structure; the module may be commercially successful, but it is pretty mundane as an adventure.

Jez Keen

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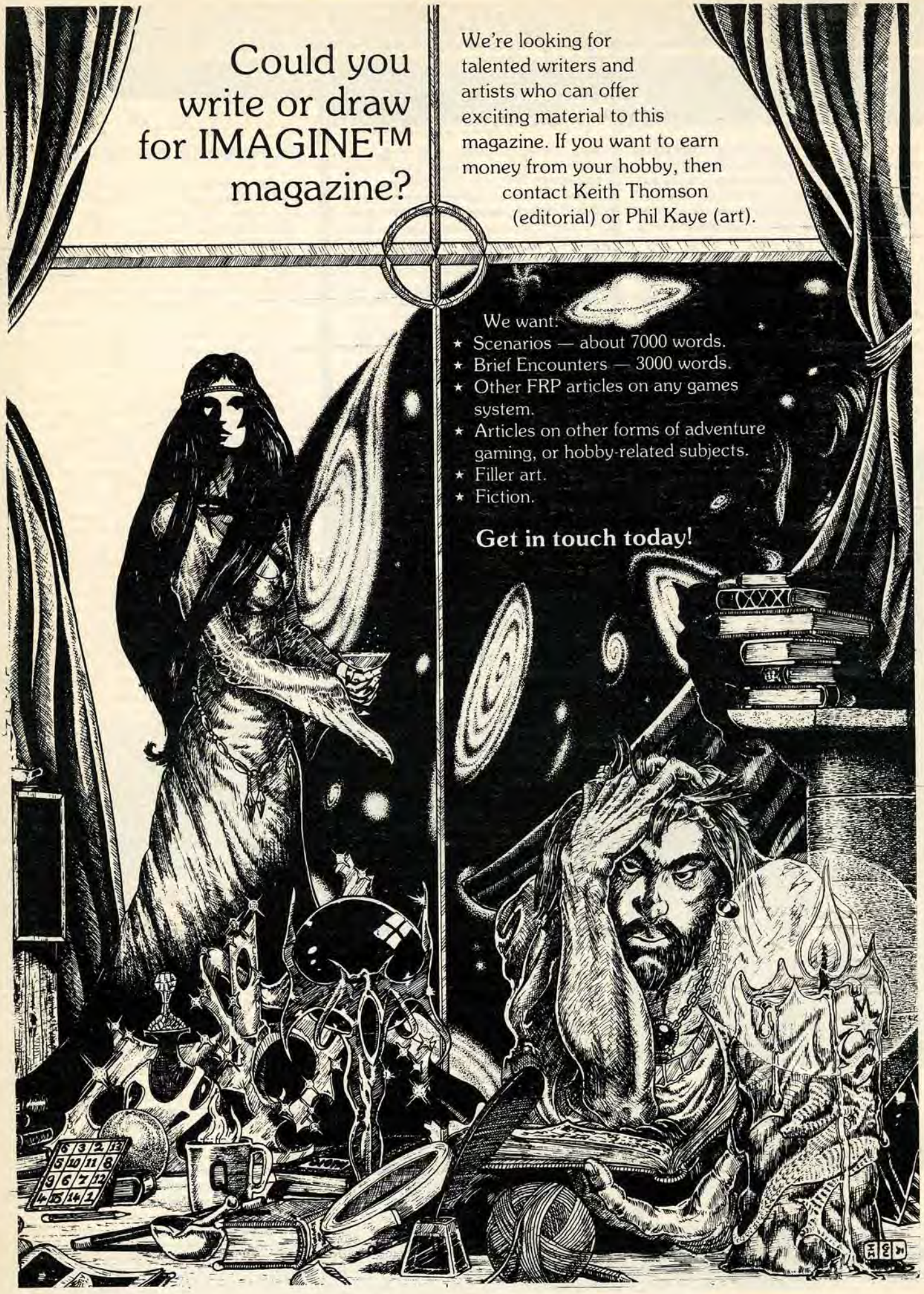

AD&D®: Morgenkainen's Fantastic Adventure

The fantastic adventure takes place under Maure Castle in the World of Greyhawk campaign, though it could be located in any high level AD&D world. Four of Gary Gygax's characters who originally attempted the dungeon — Yrag, Riggby, Bigby of hand fame (See PHB) and Mordenkainen — are given, slightly altered, for use as pre-rolled characters. Originally written in 1972-73 by Robert J Kuntz to give the great EGG (E Gary Gygax) a dungeon to play in, **WG5** makes it possible for you to follow in the master's footsteps.

The dungeon (for this is a dungeon in the traditional style) lies beyond two massive unopenable iron doors. Fortunately, though, Mordenkainen has the Key (literally!) and access to the three dungeon levels beyond proves to be little problem for our heroes. The dungeon itself is not quite so easy.

EGG admits in the preface that although there is some thinking involved this is mainly a hack and slay module and an overzealous DM could easily hack and slay the party. There are two encounters capable of killing a character or two by themselves and that doesn't include meeting the arch bad guy!

It is possible to play this module using your own characters if they are of the right level (9th-12th) but I wouldn't recommend it unless, like all American AD&D seems to be, your campaign is a high risk/high gain one.

On the whole WG5 has the feel of an early generation dungeon having traps with no real explanation; instant kill encounters; and oversights such as neglecting to give the dungeon occupants a way past the unopenable doors to get to the corner shop. There's no excuse though for the stairs that don't match up between levels 2 and 3 — caused, I think, by someone at Lake Geneva drawing level 3 upside down!

In conclusion then, not a bad one-off bit of high level fun, though I wouldn't use it in a campaign of my own.

Chris Hunter

Legends of Nippon

Legends of Nippon is something of a departure for Dixon Miniatures — after all, they are fantasy figures. But, as might be expected, they are based solidly in the area that Trevor Dixon has made his own — Japan and the Samurai. Mark Coppelstone, the designer, has done an excellent job in creating several series of figures which are perfect for Bushido Samurai Blades or any Far Eastern fantasy campaign. Indeed, a little bird informed me that these were intended as the 'Official' Bushido figures at one time.

Ninja freaks are well catered for in these castings, with nine of the sneaky little devils making an appearance, including one or two unusual ones — one has a blowpipe, another a sickle and chain. The Ninja commander makes a perfect general purpose thief. For a change, the Samurai and Ronin are not in heavy armour but in 'street clothes', and, at last, some female figures that are not in chain mail bikinis! Only two unfortunately, and neither has a naginata (the traditional weapon of Samurai women), but both are nicely posed. The other human figures include a fairly nondescript bandit and innkeeper and a Sumo wrestler. Perfect for all Sumo wrestling role-players!

It is the Bakemono (goblins), Oni (minor devils) and Dai-Oni (bigger minor devils) that will be particularly welcome to Bushido players. All are nicely detailed and several come with separate weapons, allowing a good deal of variety with a few castings. Overall: recommended, especially if you are looking for something a bit different.

Mike Brunton

Product Information

WG5 - Morgenkainen's Fantastic Adventure is a TSR product for the AD&D game, price £4.95

Legends of Nippon are from Dixon Miniatures, Unit 28, Spring Grove Mills, Linthwaite, Huddersfield. Prices vary from 33p (Ninja) to 75p (Dai-oni)

Limited Editions Castings are based at The Shot Tower Studio, 38 Mill Farm Crescent, Hounslow

Clues O is a micro adventure game for the 48k Spectrum from Imperial Software

Limited Edition Castings

Limited Edition Castings is one of the small companies which have sprung up at the edge of the hobby, offering gamers the kind of services we never realised we needed in the good old days. Once upon a time, an unused d6 or two had to lurk coyly where the chest/altar/coffin was supposed to be, while unpainted medieval knights were positioned around it/them. Then came floor plans, now we have 25mm chairs, tables, barrels, doorways....

LEC produce a wide range of such accessories for the discerning DM and player. Sadly, however, discerning DMs and players will want little to do with them. The pieces are cleanly cast but the quality of the sculpting is hardly worthy of the effort. To be blunt, they are crude, cheap, and nasty. I only worked out that the Magician's familar and book actually represented a frog and a book because that is what the supplied drawing showed — the 'frog' itself was in serious trouble as regards its aspirations to frogdom.

The rest of the sculpting is similarly crude. The 'skeletal heap' does indeed have one or two skulls poking out of bits of old sprue and runner — but where does the runner end and the casting begin? For those interested in creating a medieval/fantasy feel in your Inn dioramas and encounters, how do you fancy a medieval NCR cash register, or medieval Tetley's beer pumps?

I was not impressed by these pieces. A useful idea, to be sure, and maybe you could use one or two of the bits, but they are not essential to the games, nor particularly attractive.

Mike Brunton

CLUES O

The cassette inlay of this Imperial Software game for the 48K Spectrum tells you that in this game you take the part of a 'leading French detective' trying to solve the mystery of the murder of Major Fawcett.

The game takes about three minutes to load, and manages this sometimes difficult task first time. You are then presented with the picture of the outside of a large manor house, and description to that effect. So far, so good.

The game can best be described as a semi-graphic adventure; about 60% of the locations have pictures with them, though I'm sure you will be pleased to know that all locations have a text description. These follow the standard type of *'You are in a bedroom: exits are north and west: you can see a book.'* This illustrates the one consistent fault I find with most adventure games; text descriptions tend to be functional to the point of starkness. I've come across games with descriptions that make the central hall of a medieval castle sound like Room 101 in Orwell's *1984*. A few well-chosen words or phrases can turn an average game into a work of art, with more atmosphere than the player can handle. Programmers take heed.

To solve the riddle of the murder, you must wander around the house and surrounding grounds, finding various clues and objects that should help you find even more clues, and people whom you can question in the hope that they will tell you something useful. Eventually you should be able to form an opinion as to who killed the Major, their motive and the weapon used. At that point you input 'guess' and enter the answers, although the computer will only let you get it right if you have been through enough of the adventure.

Inputting commands is by the normal verb-noun method, and directions by the single letter. The computer knows most of the normal adventure words. One nice touch is that if you input something the computer does not understand it will tell you in French, not English!

In conclusion, Clues O is a pleasant little game of slightly below average difficulty. The graphics are well drawn, and the text, though sparse, is adequate.

D J Robinson

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Fantasy Media

*Colin Greenland, author of **Daybreak on a Different Mountain** and co-editor of SF magazine **Interzone**, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Two savage murders shock LA. The victims: two women with nothing in common but their name, Sarah Connor. A third barely escapes the wholesale slaughter of a crowded disco. Her rescuer tells her that the hunter is no ordinary psychopath; he's a killing machine from the future. Sarah Connor must live, or in 2029 the human race will die. **THE TERMINATOR** (Orion, 18) is a gripping sf horror movie. Linda Hamilton is admirable as the woman in peril who discovers her own strength to survive, and Arnold Schwarzenegger is eerily wonderful as the unstoppable cyborg.

'We're about to send a party to board an 800 foot long shipwreck floating over Io, with nine years of secrets inside, and a sleeping computer who knows the answers.' In Jupiter orbit an ill-matched Russian and American team struggle with the unknown, while their respective governments prepare to blow each other off the Earth. Peter Hyam's **2010** (MGM, PG) is a tense space drama with excellent performances from Helen Mirren and John Lithgow, and glorious special effects. For everyone who was mystified by *2001*.

On video: Disney's computer-caper **TRON** (Rank), in which three plucky young programmers descend into the micro-world to battle the Master Control Program with a sacred frisbee. Loses much of its excitement on the little screen.

Charlie the **ICEMAN** (CIC Video) has been frozen in a glacier for 40,000 years when a survey team discovers him and thaws him out — alive. One faction wants to dissect this specimen and find out the secret of suspended animation, but romantic anthropologist Timothy Hutton insists 'He's not a problem, he's a man.' Caught in the middle is John Lone as the Neanderthal, a sensitive, wry performance. Beautiful photography too.

PYRAMIDS OF MARS (BBC Video) is *Dr Who* at its eclectic best. Stuck in Edwardian England, Tom Baker and Elisabeth Sladen face an ancient and alien enemy. A yeasty brew of Hammer horror, Egyptian mythology, and sf with a touch of H G Wells.

Another time-traveller tangling with Egyptian deities is Brendan Doyle, in **THE ANUBIS GATES** by Tim Powers (Chatto, £3.95). Non-stop skullduggery, swashbuckling and sorcery envelop an American professor of literature who jumps back to 1810 to look at Samuel Taylor Coleridge, only to find himself stranded, and in mortal danger. Power's manic, macabre imagination paints London as a lurid carnival of sinister gypsies, vicious clowns, beggar tyrants, werewolves, ghouls and eyeless things that scuttle in the sewers. No GLC improvement grants then, either.

Keith Roberts's first novel **THE FURIES** is back in print (Penguin, £1.95). Traditional British sf adventure, this, a decent enough read, but not for close examination. There's no convincing reason for the invasion of giant killer wasps, especially since the narrator admits they're biologically infeasible; nor does their eventual defeat make much sense. But in between Roberts was already (in 1966) showing his talent for vivid description and detailed landscape, the scarred countryside of Wiltshire where our hero gets firmly dug in.

A more welcome re-issue is C J Cherryh's **THE CHRONICLES OF MORGAINE**, now in one fat volume (Methuen, £2.95). Deep in an unfathomable future, the safety of all the worlds is threatened by the transdimensional Gates, relics of an unknown alien culture, and by the malevolent power that squats upon them, sucking up human lives. A team of five is despatched to travel to the ends of time and space, and close the Gates. In grim battle, four die. Only Morgaine remains. Isolated, numbed by suffering, hardened by desperation, she pursues the quest, armed with a most unpleasant blade and taking help where she finds it. Cherryh's sword and sorcery is sombre and strong. She enters the minds and hearts of her characters as they struggle, with the odds and with each other.

682 pages later, you may be ready for some light relief. Chuckles abound in **THE COLOUR OF MAGIC** (Corgi, £1.75) — which is, of course, octarine, a sort of fluorescent greenish-purple, according to the wizards of the discworld. Rincewind is a wizard, just about. He knows one spell, but can't say it just in case it ends the universe. Rincewind is therefore not much in demand, until he meets a rich foreigner anxious to see the lowlife of fabled Ankh-Morpork, invents tourism, and nearly ends up as a titbit for a disgruntled dragon. (*'You know how it is with wizards. Half an hour afterwards you could do with another one.'*) Terry Pratchett does for sword and sorcery what Douglas Adams did for science fiction.

Colin Greenland

Letters

*Once more unto the mail bags.... This is the **IMAGINE**™ magazine letters page, an open forum for the debating of just about anything. If you have things to say that your fellow readers might find interesting, then drop a line to:*

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*A double pile of letters to delve through this month, and lots of issues to cover. First, the **Multi-Character Game**, as introduced by Carl Sargent in #23.*

Graham Dixon, Bradford: **MCG** was especially good. In our club, where the majority of players are biased towards hack'n'slay, I am in a small minority in favour of the integrated campaign. We considered the MCG, but were put off by some of the problems mentioned in the article. Finally, a series of problems over level differences decided us in its favour. I recommend the MCG even to groups of 8-9 players as it solves the problems of training and incompatible members in parties at a stroke.

Gavin Cameron, Kenton, Middx: MCG wasn't very enlightening. I certainly hope that my campaigns aren't as artificial as Carl Sargent's.

Jenn, Southwell, Notts: I can see Carl's point in favouring MCGs — some of his reasons are very good — but....

1. All the ideas come from fewer sources. 3 or 4 players instead of 5 or 6 makes a noticeable difference to the sort of solutions the party will find to its problems.
2. There are other ways to stop a player becoming dominant: a simple 'Shut Up!' or ad-libbing a situation where that character is largely useless.
3. A good DM doesn't have 'a room of people all screaming melee round actions at you together'. They get asked to speak in turn or someone 'calls' party actions.
4. Players can be taken aside in *any* game.
5. 2 or 3 separate characters solves the problem of level difference just as well. If your 8th level character dies, well your 5th isn't that far behind.

*All very valid points, I think. As always, any positive attempt to alter the style of play finds a few ready to convert and a few more who cry 'blasphemy!' When you start tackling mechanics, you find a much more sympathetic audience. For example, this was a typical reaction to Paul Vernon's **Languages**:*

Nigel Boulton, Newport IOW: I was generally in agreement with Paul's article. It did however remind me of an old question, namely why do MUs have to use **read magic** to read a scroll? In the **Expert D&D®** rulebook it says that 10th level thieves can read scrolls with only a 10% chance of mistake. This seems ludicrous to me.

I agree with Paul, the spell should be done away with, and I forbid thieves to use scrolls since being able to read them is not enough alone.

*Of course, if you don't want to have a separate magical script, and have MUs in different lands writing scrolls in different languages, then **read magic** is essential. The bit about 10th level thieves is one of those abilities gained by levels that never seem to make sense. I DM'd a game where a high-level monk fell foul of some poison. I forgot he was meant to be immune! But why should a monk suddenly become immune to poison, or a paladin suddenly be able to whistle up a warhorse? How do others run this sort of situation?*

We've not yet had the opportunity to crow about some of the recent successes in our 'umble little mag. Let's run through some comments, starting on with #21, the Super-hero special.

David Ball, High Wycombe, Bucks: #21 was great; **Kiss of Death** was a great battle for Captain Britain. Are you going to publish the **Marvel-phile** now appearing in **DRAGON** magazine?

David Webster, Birstall, Leics: Something I don't understand is the new enthusiasm for superhero rpgs. I'll stick with the excellent **V&V**, a good game which gives the atmosphere of comic books.

Gavin Cameron: The **Iron Galleon** (#22) was excellent.

Donal Sheridan, Ruislip, Middx: The Michael Moorcock special was (must keep myself under control) very good. And seeing that the **Hitch-hiker's Guide** is so popular, perhaps you could get something out of Douglas Adams.

Ben Goodale, Crianlarich, Scotland: Having a Michael Moorcock special was a great idea, and I look forward to seeing stuff on other authors.

Christopher Kinnear, Swansea: I must congratulate you on your Moorcock feature, which was nothing short of epic. I would recommend any reader to get into the Eternal Champion series. Apart from its graphic description of the struggle of Law and Chaos, the breadth of the stage for this conflict demonstrates that DMs should try taking a wider view than the single dungeon or purchased, pre-planned adventure.

*We have several ideas like this in the pipeline, including an SF feature on Bob Shaw, and the Cartographic Service of his **Ship of Strangers** series developed for the **STARFRONTIERS** and **Traveller** games. You Cthulhu fans should find something pretty meaty with a fantasy world based on the work of Brian Lumley. Lastly, I recommend you again to get out there and find a copy of Steven Gallagher's **Follower**, because we've got a scenario for you that will make you wish you'd spent your pocket money on some decent security locks....*

Back to #22

David Webster: The **Vampire Revamped** has some nice ideas, though it still remains a far-off possibility in my campaign because of its high power. In fact, I'm bringing some of the ultra-powerful creatures down-to-earth with mutants, young and cross-breeds so that my low-level PCs get a chance to look at them.

Peter Blanchard, Woking, Surrey: I see a tendency in **WD** and **IMAGINE** for monsters to be seen purely in terms of their statistics. **Vampire Revamped** falls into this category, promoting the use of monsters solely as fighting machines. I think rather than the ever-more-deadly monster, there should be more emphasis on articles like **Ghosts** (#23), which give an insight into the workings of a monster. There should also be more of an emphasis on DMs role-playing monsters. Then players wouldn't get tired of fighting the usual horrible things, and there would be less demand for more new ones.

Dave Newton, Bolton, Lancs: Chris Barlow's **Ghosts** was both timely and excellent. My group are about to embark on a journey that will take them to a haunted hall, and — thanks to Chris — the encounters will have extra spice. But it is not haunted by just five or ten ghosts, but by countless thousands! When in doubt, think **big**!

The encounter will be enlivened by the smell of the spirit's homeland wafting up the stairs, and by subtle changes in atmosphere; the ghosts will not harm the group, but the reaction of the party passing through each hair-raising chamber should be compulsive DM-ing.

Kally Maye, Stubbington, Hants: The feature on **Ghosts** was just the thing to liven up undead in any system, and was expertly timed for those of us who saw **Ghostbusters** and wanted such things in our own campaigns.

I doubt if Chris Barlow intended his article to be a Ghostbusters 'tie-in', but, so long as you enjoyed it....

*Thanks for all your comments and ideas – keep them coming. It's particularly interesting to discover just how you use articles we publish. The **Pelinore** campaign, for example, is being followed closely by some, 'looted' for buildings and NPCs by others, while others still are taking just the ideas, and heavily redesigning to fit their own campaign. So, how about those ideas for thieves last time, or the oriental campaign material in this issue?*

We'll finish with some quickies, something I always want to put in but don't find room for.

Nigel Boulton: The idea of a theme in each issue is a good one. It helps maintain interest in an idea which otherwise might be forgotten, and makes reference quick. How about an issue on the more common humanoid races?

Gavin Day: I notice **WD** have a regular feature on miniature figures and painting. I'm sure there are other rpg-ers who would like to see a similar article on **IMAGINE**'s pages.

Darren Parks, St Ives: Who does Paul de la Pena think he is? If that yank is taking the mickey out of the Queen's English.... Don't you make any excuses for him, or you'll get the same.

I wouldn't dream of it.... only I think when it said Cleveland after his name it meant Cleveland (Yorkshire and Keep Going) rather than Cleveland (Ohio)....

David Gray, Bonnyrig, Scotland: I have the doubtful pleasure of being the GM for a **DRAGONQUEST®** game (perhaps you've heard of it). Idly leafing through #7, I came across the article **The Quest For The Perfect Game**; **IMAGINE** now declares itself the magazine for players of the **D&D** game and never seems to mention **DQ**. I'd appreciate any news on the game, and thought I'd let you know that there's still a lot of interest in the system.

Kally Maye: I disagree with the comments made about the **animate dead** spell in **Dispel Confusion** (#23). I consider the animation of creatures with intelligence and soul to be totally beyond the ethos of clerics of good alignment. In **no** circumstances does the end justify the means.

John Headland, Fakenham, Norfolk: How dare **Illuminations** (#23) connect **Judge Dredd** with rough justice. The Judge is a caring, compassionate man. I refer to Prog 388 where he spends 130,000 credits of the city's money to give little Bonnie Crickle a new life. He always administers the Law fairly; when Mean Machine Angel was killed in an explosion, he was brought back to life to spend the rest of his days in prison.

....letters....letters....letters

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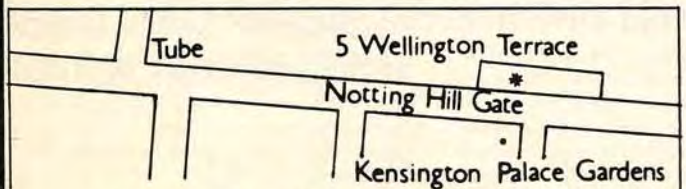

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A tantalising fragment of map, found in the hand of a dead thief.... showing a mountain pass and the entrance to a lost mine....

It is interesting to note the way in which the **D&D®** game, like so many other things, is subject to fashion. Back in the 1970s, in the early days of the game, the general philosophy behind running a fantasy role-playing campaign tended to be along the lines of setting up a situation which was complex and diverse, and then letting the players explore it at will, with relatively little direction from the DM. Today, it seems to be rather more prevalent for the DM to draw up a scenario for one particular adventure, in rather greater detail, but which the players have to play. In fact, in some cases their whole course of action is virtually predetermined, and if the players choose alternative strategies, they have to be guided back to the straight and narrow by the DM.

Nowhere is this more the case than in wilderness adventures, and having spent the last two issues looking at the running of these, I intend to look now at the designing of wilderness adventures. And necessarily, the problems you encounter in designing a wilderness adventure depend on how you view a role-playing game: as ideally dictated by the actions of the players, or by the designs of the DM. I might add, just for the record (although it is probably pretty obvious to regular readers) I tend to favour the first approach myself. But it has to be said that the issue is entirely one of taste. I would not be inclined to argue that one approach was necessarily better than the other.

Let us look at what the two different approaches look like. With the old philosophy, the game might go something as follows. The players are getting a little bored with hacking Level 4 of the Dungeon to bits, and feel the need for something a little different — a change of scene, one might say. In the course of the last month's adventuring, they have picked up various rumours and legends, both in the Dungeon and the nearby village. For instance, there was that tantalising fragment of map found in the hand of a dead thief, showing a mountain pass and the entrance to a lost mine. Then there was the conversation with the local alchemist, who bemoaned the fact that he had used up the last of his shrubby cinquefoil, a rare plant only to be found by a lakeside many score miles away. And what about the rumours of a mysterious snake-like creature that a few travellers claimed to have spotted two days' journey to the west?

Appetite sufficiently whetted for a bit of travel, the players decide it would be a worthwhile investment of time to ingratiate themselves with the alchemist and go and search out this rare plant. The DM has already figured where this plant grows, what they will have to cross to reach it, and what is guarding it, because he has plotted out everything of interest in the countryside 100 miles in each direction. This naturally entailed a lot of work, but the benefit is that he can relax while the players debate where they will go, because wherever they go, he has already got everything prepared. So, during the preceding play, he has been able to have NPCs throw out all manner of cryptic hints and allusions to what lies beyond the nearest hills; he knows that whenever the players come round to taking these up, the relevant details are already prepared. Indeed, the very fact that the DM has worked out all the surrounding geography, actually encourages him to refer to it, thus increasing the sense of background.

Meanwhile, after a day's journey in search of the alchemist's plant, the players come upon a grove of curious-looking trees, from the centre of which protrudes a slender spire. Intrigued, they temporarily forget their quest, and decide to investigate. Little do they know what awaits them within the grove... (And the rest, dear reader, is up to you!)

The second, more modern approach, owes a lot, I rather think, to the influence of other role-playing games like **Traveller** and **Call of Cthulhu** — particularly the former. The same adventure as described above, would happen slightly differently. Probably there would be no Dungeon in the traditional sense of the word. The player-characters, ready for an adventure, would assemble in some convenient place, usually the nearest pub. There will be a few stock peasant-type NPCs in the bar with them, and essentially the players simply wait for something to happen, usually the arrival of someone significant who is going to start the adventure off, or, to borrow a term, the Patron. In this case it is the village alchemist, who looks very worried. One of the player-characters inveigles him into conversation (the obvious thing to do) and the alchemist unburdens his cares. 'Oh woe is me — not a single sprig of shrubby cinquefoil do I have left, and the Baron has demanded a dose of my special cinquefoil potion to ease his gout. Whatever shall I do? Alack the day, etc.' 'Fear not,' quips gallant Noggin (or whatever the player-character happens to be called), 'it so happens my pals and I are looking for a bit of a jaunt, so if you'd care to make it worth our while...'

And so the players set out on their quest. The two main differences are, on the negative side, the players had no choice at all, and knew the moment the Patron stepped in the door that they would have to do exactly what he suggested, or go and play Manic Miner for the rest of the afternoon. On the positive side, since the DM knew in advance that the players were going to follow that adventure and only that adventure, he could put a lot more detail into all the encounters which he knows in advance will be called into play.

Next issue we can consider in more detail the preparations that the DM will be called upon to make.

Roger Musson

*Previous **Stirge Corner** themes are detailed below, and can be obtained in the relevant back issue.*
#1 & 3: Introduction to rpgs; 4-5: Beginner DMs; 6-7: Staying alive; 8: Treasure*; 9: Monsters*; 10: Treasure & Monsters*; 11: Time & Motion*; 12: Role-playing; 15: Mapping*; 16: Scale, miniature figures; 17: DM-ing equipment*; 18-21: Alignments; 22: Languages; 23-24: Wildernesses*

** mainly for DMs*

Please note that #2, 13 and 14 are out of print.

The Space Where The Amateur Press Tell The Professionals Where They're Going Wrong

SOAPBOX

This month's contributor: PETE TAMLYN

Where do we go from here?

Both as a game and as an art-form, role-playing is still very much in its infancy. Chess and theatre have been around for hundreds of years, **Monopoly** and cinema for decades, while the **D&D®** game has only just passed its tenth birthday. Yet so fast is the pace of life these days that people are already beginning to say that role-playing is dead. In fanzines, disillusioned veterans complain that the material they produced in the early days is being endlessly rediscovered by younger editors and they postulate that there is nothing new to be said. On the professional side we are being deluged with licenced products as if the games producers, devoid of new ideas, can only continue in business by the use of tie-ins to well-known films, books or TV series. Is this depressing view correct, and if it isn't, where do we go from here?

To start with, I think we need to look at this problem realistically. Much as veteran role-players would like to see a continuous flow of new, interesting material, there are certain considerations that weigh heavily against this. Newcomers, for example: it is impossible for folk who are only 11 years old in 1985 to come into the role-playing hobby with a full knowledge of what has been going on there for the whole of their life. There will always be people who need to be told the pros and cons of skill systems; every year someone will invent an Archer character class; and material to cater for such people will be produced. The other point to bear in mind is that very few innovations ever make 'classic' status. How many playwrights contemporary to Shakespeare, or games invented the same year as Monopoly, are still popular? One or two rpgs will survive down the years, the rest will come and go with the whims of fashion.

However, while few games will survive the test of time, there is no reason why rpgs in general should not continue to develop. Indeed, the recent flood of new games has contained some interesting innovations. After all, the mechanisms for the **AD&D®**, **RuneQuest** and **Traveller** games are now fixed, but a new game can use new ideas, and some of them do. The concept of Hero Points, pioneered by the **James Bond 007** game, and the Campaign Ratings system in **Golden Heroes**, are excellent examples of useful new techniques in game design and staunch critics of AD&D (such as Paul Mason and myself) have been quite complimentary about TSR's latest games. As long as rpgs continue to be designed, there will always be possibilities for innovation.

In addition there is an opportunity for role-playing to mature as a discipline. Up until now, things have been pretty haphazard. Each popular game has introduced its own terminology and partisan adherents of particular systems often seem to believe that the way their game does things is the way all role-playing is done. There is a need, I believe, for someone to step back from the plethora of games thus far produced and try to make some sense of it all, so that the basic stock of role-playing knowledge can be reduced and simplified. Whether there would be a market for such a study is another matter, but I would like to see somebody do it all the same.

Then again, there are fields of rpg design and practice that have been very little discussed so far. Designing a new monster for D&D is easy; writing your own combat system is something that lots of people have done; even producing an entire game system is not uncommon; all these things are basically technical in nature. But how much discussion have you seen of the artistic side of role-playing? For every hundred new monsters has there been one article on scenario design? When someone produces a new combat system does he tell you how to GM it in an interesting and entertaining fashion? And surely one of the reasons for all these tie-in games is that few people know how to produce 'worlds' as exciting as those currently being borrowed from non-gaming arts.

All this, of course, can come about without even considering possible new directions for role-playing: proper development of it as an art-form or greatly increased computerisation. Role-playing will only die if we let it. Keep on coming up with new ideas, folks.

Pete Tamlyn

PRESS CUTTINGS

I have had some response to my plea for feedback on this column and many thanks to those people who wrote in. The column is designed to let interested people find out about fandom and the fanzines available; it would be failing in its aims if no-one read it and responded. I'll always be glad to hear any comments from anyone (or even to get contributions for **SoapBox**!). I know feedback is an unusual thing in a professional magazine: communication tends to be one-way; but this column is more of an extension of games fandom than anything and all communications should be two-way.

This month's heart-felt plea over, let's get on with the zines. Since I have been reviewing fanzines for **IMAGINE™** magazine, I've seen quite a few comments both pro and con this column and me in particular. Now, according to **SEWARS** 23, I am deliberately ignoring them! SEWARS is not my type of fanzine, but I try to review every zine fairly. SEWARS is a regular source of **AD&D®** game material for people who want scenarios and monsters. The level of writing doesn't approach a lot of the other, newer zines, but lasting 23 issues must prove something. There Chris, I've mentioned you this time...

Club fanzines seem to be in vogue at the moment, at least people are sending them for review. SEWARS is one example of a zine produced by a local games club, and **THE BAT** 2 is the journal of the Surrey Adventurelord and mainly contains pompous statements by the club organisers; it contains very little of interest, especially to non-members. **DRAGONFIRE** 23 is produced by Manchester Grammar School's Fantasy Society, and continues to be of a lower standard than most generally available frp fanzines. Perhaps it is the captive audience a club fanzine caters to which is responsible for a lower quality of content; or the small pool of contributors it can draw on? Whatever the reason, I must admit I haven't seen any particularly inspiring club zines.

The general frp fanzines are another matter, however, and there is a lot of new blood still coming on the scene, offering material that would put many prozine articles to shame. **NEXT STOP JUPITER** is the new zine from Jez Keen, who used to edit DragonFire, and on his own he has put together a far more entertaining package. NSJ doesn't really contain anything substantial, but taken as an overall read it is very pleasant and interesting. The fanzine format offers an opportunity to break away from the formality a prozine imposes, and I think it is important to take advantage of this. Too many fanzines stick to a formal style and lose the fresh, individual approach of the best zines.

THE JOURNAL OF THE SENSELESS CARNAGE SOCIETY used to concentrate on scenarios and the like with very little of the personality and humour that improves any fanzine. Recently, despite the (hopefully temporary) loss of their cover artist STORD, the editors have been trying to liven up the zine. The latest issue bears this out with a chatty editorial, zine reviews and a letter column. There are all the usual useful articles in the the form of a long AD&D scenario and a **Traveller** piece on killing people (but what else do people do in Traveller games?). All in all, the zine is a pleasant mix of fact and, er, chat.

RUNESTONE 5 has finally reared its murky head after a long delay since issue 4. The editor Bill has been busy getting jobs and things

recently, but this issue sees the addition of Nick Edwards as a co-editor, so RS should be regular from now on. You may remember that I've mentioned Nick before, as he has recently launched **MANIC DEPRESSIVE**. Well, he isn't going to be editing two fanzines — one is enough for most mortals (Trevor Mendham is another matter entirely) and so MC is being integrated into RuneStone. This issue offers an introduction to wargaming and a **Call of Cthulhu** scenario among its attractions.

Call of Cthulhu appears again in **THE FIERY CROSS** 3; my prediction last issue that it was catching on seems to be true. The Mystery of Greenfields is a scenario for inexperienced investigators. For the more traditionalist, there is still AD&D material and a short Fighting Fantasy style solo adventure with its own rules system. Add plenty of chat and reviews and you have a very promising new fanzine.

Also new is **DRUNE KROLL** 1 from Justin Horrell, someone who has appeared in fanzine letter columns for a while now. As first issues go it is fairly typical; Justin says it was a long time in the making and this shows as there is an overall feeling of discontinuity between the various articles. Yet it isn't a bad first issue by any means and probably well worth looking at if you want to start contributing to a new and young fanzine. **NORST CLAW** 2 is reasonably new and sadly the editors seem to have learnt very little from producing the first issue. The layout doesn't help matters, being produced fairly scruffily on one side of the paper only and the content is very standard AD&D and **D&D®** game material.

Trevor Mendham is exception to most rules, and it seems he is not happy with producing just two fanzines — **ATU XVIII**, a chat zine and **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, an excellent news sheet. The latest SFS contains news of a new games magazine which will not cover the hobby nor run any games, but will cover actual games, and carry articles on new and old games alike. Trevor intends it to be semi-professional and I think he is really looking to recreate the feeling which went with the old Games and Puzzles magazine. Write and ask him for details, and send a sub for School for Scandal at the same time!

SCAN's new issue contains all the silly cartoon strips and parodies which make it such a great magazine. It also contains the news that Scan are planning to go Mega Big (or so the advert assures us). This means that Scan will become a 28-page satirical magazine with colour covers for a mere 75p — I can hardly wait!

I have concentrated on frp zines for this issue, but in the next column I'll take a closer, more detailed look at the various postal gaming magazines and the whole area of running games by post. This issue let's just run through the most interesting zines and leave the rest for the address column.

The sad news this month is that after all the discussion and contemplation, Brian Creese has finally taken the step and folded **NMR!** This is not the last we'll see of Brian or the NMR! people, though, as the co-editor Ken Bain is expanding his games sub-zine to become a fanzine in its own right. Thus NMR! 57 is **A BOLT FROM THE BLUE** #1. Brian will still be contributing to the zine, he just doesn't have the time to run it. **MAD POLICY** 104 is a very special issue as the **Diplomacy** game number 'AK' whch generated reams and reams of fascinating and amusing press saga finally ends in a four-way draw. The end of an era as Richard puts it.

Which just leaves the addresses. In future, I won't review every zine sent in to this column every time, but will devote more space to a few zines, hopefully making the column more readable and more interesting. All the zines received are listed below, however.

Mike Lewis

ANSIBLE, Dave Langford, 94 London Rd, Reading, Berks RG1 5AU (5 for £2); **THE BAT**, John Golden, 56 Brook Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon, Surrey CR4 7RS (?); **DRAGONFIRE**: see Next Stop Jupiter (30p); **DRUNE KROLL**, Justin Horrell, Sunny Bank, Stouthall Garage, Reynoldston, Swansea SA3 1AN (45p); **FANTASY ADVERTISER**, Martin Skidmore, 25 Cornleaze, Withywood, Bristol (50p); **FIERY CROSS**, Tom Stacey, The Mill House, Rays Hill, Hawridge, Nr Chesham, Bucks (60p); **HOP-SCOTCH**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts (50p); **JOURNAL OF THE SENSELESS CARNAGE SOCIETY**, Simon Hartley, 5 Burgh Heath Rd, Epsom, Surrey (65p); **LANKHMAR STAR DAILY**, Robert Nott, 158 Pendeen Park, Helston, Cornwall (55p); **MAD POLICY**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG (40p); **MASTERS OF THE PRIME**, Bryan Betts, 36 Ingestre Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham (40p); **MOUSE POLICE**, Rob Wilson, Penryn, 4 Campion Road, Leamington Spa, Warks CV32 5XC (40p); **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Park Road, Kingston on Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG (45p); **NEXT STOP JUPITER**: 1 Glenfield Road, Stockport SK4 2QP (45p); **NORST CLAW**, Peter North, 29 Latchford Road, Heswall, Wirral L60 3RN (45p); **RUNESTONE**, Bill Lucas, 26 Parker Close, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3RT (50p); **SCAN**, John Freeman, 126a Greaves Road, Lancaster LA1 4UW (30p + p&p); **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, Trevor Mendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1PH (4 for £1); **SEWARS**, Chris Baylis, 12 The Fryth, Basildon, Essex (80p); **SWANSEA WITH ME**, Matt Williams, 24 Moor St, Earlsdon, Coventry CV6 6EQ (40p); **TAKE THAT YOU FIEND**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1JG (35p); **TWIQU**, Graham Staplehurst, 62 Church Road, Harlesden, London NW10 (?); **VIENNA**, Richard Egan, 64 Rookery Rd, Knowle, Bristol BS4 2DT (40p)

The publisher explains the classification of TSR modules for the uninitiated...

Over the years, a number of folk have expressed curiosity, not to say utter bafflement or derision, about TSR's method of classifying modules for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games. Thus, B is for Basic, so why not E for Expert, C for Companion, A for Advanced and so on?

Certainly the task of deciphering the system (if it can be given such a grandiose and obviously inaccurate description) must seem to the newcomer rather like an exercise in Babylonic cuneiform or analogous to deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Maybe some history will help. But if you're expecting logic as well, you may be in for a disappointment.

The original idea was that the classification letter should relate to the *nature* of the module and its subject matter. So the first three modules, about giants, were prefixed by the letter G (for **G**iant, not Gygax, though he was the author) and the next three, about drow, by the letter D. So far, so good. No-one seems to have given thought at that time to the prefixing of modules about goblins or dwarves, ghouls or dragons (the latter, in particular, is a bit odd) but that's a problem for another day.

The next module was **S1**. About scorpions? Shadows? Socialists, even? Not a bit of it. It was about traps, a demi-lich and high peril. Now not even Americans spell 'trap' or 'lich' with an S. No, S was for **S**pecial — ie they couldn't think of a specific category, so invented a catch-all.

Then **B1**. Well, at least that makes sense.

C1 was intended to be first in a series of **C**ompetition modules. Which settled that. No-one at that time dreamed of a thing called the Companion Set (or even Conan).

T1, similarly, was the first in a series about **T**owers, and was about a village. I suppose towers and villages are pretty much the same thing — they are both built on the ground (usually) for instance. By the way, I am told that **T2** is coming — as part of a monster module called **T1-4**. Later in 1985 is the current gossip.

Q1 was written by Dave Sutherland, was the first in a planned series about adventuring in other planes, linked with **D3**, had strange mutations of magic, and... got it! — a **Q**ueen of the Demonweb Pits. The A series was written by four different authors, was about slavers, was set in a variety of locations and was published in such a way that we got **A3** before **A2**. So heaven knows how A crept in (yes, A is for **A**dvanced, but that didn't seem particularly relevant).

Then the U and UK series. These letters denote modules written in the UK, but beyond that they convey no information (so they fit nicely with the rest of the system). Mind you, the original idea was that these should be called F (for **F**oreign, just to make sure we felt wanted). Until very recently, the British arrival at a US airport had to go through a door marked *Aliens*. A nice welcoming gesture; I used to feel as though I had green skin and tentacles.

Then someone tried to rationalise things. For Advanced, there would be four categories — N for **N**ovice, L for **L**ow, I for **I**ntermediate and H for **H**igh, the last three referring to complexity and experience level. This system would solve all problems — suddenly the sun would jerk up above the horizon and all would be clear. The first examples were **N1** and **L1**. As it happens, N1 was written by Doug **N**iles, and L1 was written by **L**en **L**akofka and was set in the **L**endore Isles, so there was great scope for confusion. But the I modules started as intended and still continue to this day.

Trouble is, the moment the rule was made, the exceptions started to creep in. EX appeared — I understand for **EX**tra, which is a bit baffling since all modules are really extras — and was promptly confused with the Expert Set. We got CB for **C**onan the **B**arbarian and DL for **D**ragon**L**ance (or **D**on't **R**oleplay). WG crept in, for **W**orld of **G**reyhawk, but just to make things more interesting, the first module in the WG series was **WG4**. It then transpired that **S1** should really have been **WG1**, **S3** should have been **WG2** and **S4** should have been **WG3**. Simple, really, when you think about it.

It wasn't much different with the Basic modules. B reigned OK, but X was chosen for Expert; there's some sort of logic here, though what's wrong with P or even R, since they are both in the word as well. After all, E wasn't in use then, nor has it been used since. At that time K was chosen for **K**ompanion but fortunately that idea never caught on and we now have CM for **C**ompanion. The Masters Set wasn't even in planning then, so no small surprise that M was used for **M**agic **M**arker and later MV for **M**agic **V**iewer. In something approaching desperation, it seems, we got O for **O**ne-on-**O**ne and XL for Expert **L**icensed, so I am led to believe. At least BSOLO and XSOLO are reasonably self-explanatory. Though if the final set in the series of five is to be called the Immortals Set, which is the current proposal, I has already been used so we have a problem again. R is still up for grabs, so maybe that's where it will land, but it's more likely to be double-barrelled like IM.

And look to the future. There are a few letters in our own alphabet which haven't been used yet, and when they are gone we have the whole Greek alphabet and many other alphabets to tackle. For really inventive people, the fun can continue indefinitely.

Of course, monumental confusion reigns. The newcomer, buying the Basic Set, will probably settle for **B1** as the first module, which is logical enough. By rights, then, **A1** should be the first module for the newcomer to Advanced, but it isn't — the right one is **U1**, **T1** or **N1**, and how on earth is the poor newcomer expected to deduce that? The buyer of the Expert Set gets **X1** in the box so has an unfair advantage in the intelligence game, but woe betide the purchaser of the Companion Set who reckons **C1** is a good starter — it's the wrong game system and miles away from the right experience level. When the Masters Set appears later this year, the logical purchase is **M1**, right? Or **MV1**, right? Wrong. Both are totally inappropriate.

When all the smoke has cleared away, it's one helluva mess. As a system intended to help, and with the single exception of the B modules, it's quite useless and confusing to the gamer who buys, the retailer who sells and the distributor who tries to promote and, poor deluded fool, to explain.

At the risk of being innovative, I reckon a module (in its virgin shrink-wrap and therefore unassailable without risking the wrath of the eagle-eyed shop assistant) should say four things on the cover (title and art apart). What system is the module for? Basic, Advanced, Expert or what? What experience level of characters is it for? Is it for the novice or the experienced DM? And is it a stand-alone or part of a series (in the latter case, what are the others)? The present system does two of these things very marginally, the other two not at all, and furthermore gratuitously confuses by giving misleading information.

It seems someone, somewhere, has a lesson to learn, and methinks it's us.

Don Turnbull

PHALANX
by R. Grenville-Evans
CHUNK the NINTH: "OTHRUNU AGAIN"
WEASEL'S REASONING FROM AVAILABLE EVIDENCE HAS LED HIM TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE LOVELY MOURLA IS REALLY A WITCH, AND THE VERY SUBSTANCE OF THE DRAGON, WHICH WAS ABOUT TO GRILL AND DEVOUR HIM AND OGRYN... WHEN THEY WERE WHISKED INTO ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE, WHICH THEY FIND JUST AS FRAUGHT WITH MENACE AND EVEN MORE WITH MYSTERY....
RRRIGHT! I'M FOR DOIN' A RUNNER! COME ON, OG; AND YOU, MADAM, UNLESS YOU ARE JUST A TRICK OF THE LIGHT...
I'M GOING IN - IT'S ABOUT TIME I HAD A GOOD SWING WITH THIS SWORD!
STOP HIM - WE CAN ONLY GET TO THE PUPPETS THROUGH THEIR MASTER... AND HE MUST BE NEARBY!
OH, I'M SURE OGRYN CAN COPE WITH A COUPLE OF TOYS --THAT'S IF HE HAS THE SENSE TO CUT AT THE STRINGS...
WAARGHHH!!
WHICH... OH DEAR, HE HAS NOT.
THOK
I'M GOING TO HELP HIM...
NO, STAY... THE SOURCE OF THIS MENACE IS....
...HERE! GOT YOU, STYNCH!
GYULK! CROAK! CUSS 'YE!!
AW, NO! ME SWORD'S GOT STUCK IN THIS SHIELD!!
YOU AND YOUR SILLY PUPPETS! LET THAT YOUNG MAN GO THIS INSTANT!!
MUM...
BREAK THE SPELL, OR I'LL BREAK YOUR NECK!!
RATTLE RATTLE
QUICK!
KAGH! AK! ALL RIGHT! THIS TIME! BUT GET EVEN, I WILL! AARKH!!

TAKING A DIVE, EH? JUST WHEN I WAS GETTING ME WILD UP!
GET THIS, BUM-NOSE, I WANT YOU TO DROP ME BACK TO MY OWN TIME AND PLACE, SEE?
Y'MEAN, WALLED UP IN YOUR MASTER'S DUNGEON? HAK! HAK!
DANASKMI IS NOT MY MASTER! I'VE A MIND TO KNEEL ON YER WINDPIPE!!
DANASKMI? LORD BANSHURGA?
THAT'S THE BLISTER! ARE YOU FROM THE RAINBOW COVE TOO?
GKARK
IT'S NOT CALLED THAT ANY MORE -NOT FOR A HUNDRED YEARS, SO OLD HORKIN SAYS...
THEN... YOU ARE FROM THE FUTURE... BUT IF DANASKMI STILL LIVES... AND HORKIN...
PERHAPS STYNCH KNOWS... HE SEEMS TO KNOW US. OH... I'M WEASEL — THIS IS MY FRIEND, OGRYN.
I AM OTHRUNU, APPRENTICE SORCERER, OR AT LEAST, I...
OTHRUNU? YOU?!
I KNEW THAT I HAD SEEN YOU BEFORE; I KNEW YOU WERE SOMEHOW SPECIAL!
OTHRUNU — I UNDERSTAND — THIS IS YOU AS YOU WERE...
I THOUGHT THAT WAS A BLOKE!
WHO?
SHH!
DON'T SHUSH ME!
VERY ASTUTE, WEASEL. A CENTURY AGO, I WAS WALLED UP BY DANASKMI - MY ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPE WAS TO USE A SPELL WHICH BROUGHT ME TO THIS PLACE - A TIME POCKET - WHICH IS HOW I WAS ABLE TO SNATCH YOU FROM THE DRAGON!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO?
MY YOUNGER SELF CANNOT SEE ME! AH IT ALL COMES BACK... I REMEMBER WATCHING YOU TALK WITH AIR!
OH - I'M OFF! COME ALONG, STYNCH.
OTHRUNU - YOU'RE FADING AWAY!
I WAS ABOUT TO IF I'D HAD TO WAIT ANY MORE
HE MEANS THE OTHER ONE
MY MAGIC IS WEAK. FOLLOW THEM. MAKE STYNCH RETURN YOU, THEN SEEK ME OUT... MOURLA IS IN DANGER...
THEN MOURLA ISN'T EVIL... WELL, WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!
OY, WEAS - THE MERMAIDS - THE ROCKS - THEY'RE GONE
ROCKS DON'T WALK ABOUT, SURELY?
EVERYTHING COMES AND GOES ALL THE TIME IN THIS PLACE. IT'S CALLED A TIME POCKET. YOU SEE, WHEN I WAS WALLED UP, I...
YEAH, YOU JUST TOLD US
I DRIPPING WELL DIDN'T! ANYHOW, IT'S OF NO CONSEQUENCE -CERTAINLY NOT TO YOU! WE ARE HERE - DO YOUR BIT, STYNCH - GONG THE GONG!
THE PRECISE VIBRATIONS WILL FIND OR CREATE NEW FISSURES IN THE TIME WALL - STYNCH, I HAPPEN TO KNOW, IS GOOD WITH THE GONG.
AMAZING HOW SO TINY A THING HAS SUCH POWER
YEAH, WELL NONE OF US IS PERFECTLY FORMED -- SKINNYLEGS!!
STYNCH SEEMS TO HAVE FORSAKEN RHYME... WITHOUT REASON. NEXT TIME: BACK... IN THE LAIR OF THE CRAB!

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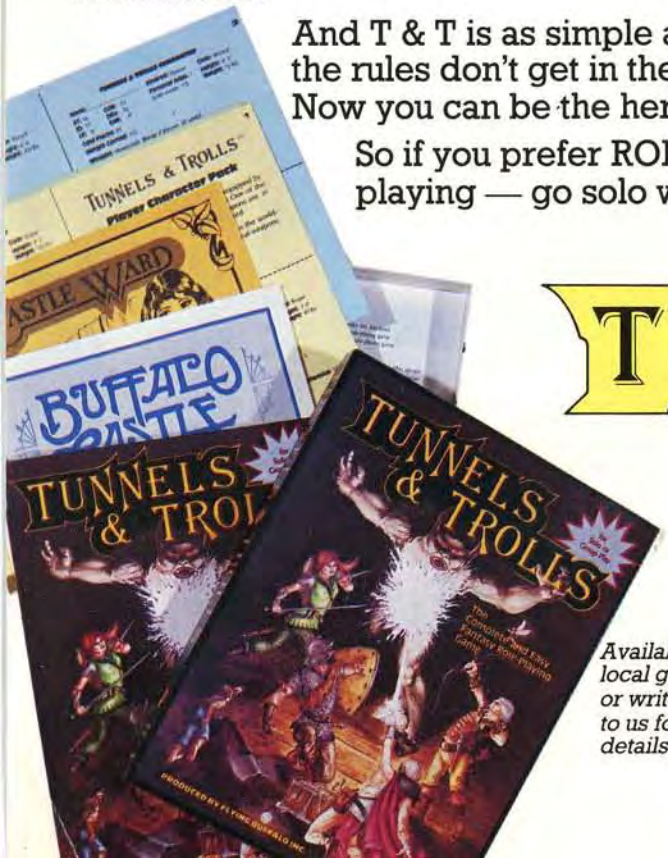

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